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# Iconografia Dantesca



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Second Series  
Iconografia Dantesca

THE PICTORIAL REPRESENTATIONS

TO

DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY

BY

Ludwig Volkmann

REVISED AND AUGMENTED BY  
THE AUTHOR

WITH A PREFACE

BY

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With Seventeen Plates and Four Woodcuts

LONDON

H. GREVEL & CO.

33, KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

1899

61153

AMERICAN TO VINU  
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P R E F A C E .



R. VOLKMANN has earned the gratitude of all lovers of Dante by the admirable work which it is our privilege to introduce to English readers; a work as important from the enquiries it suggests as from the original research it contains—a work which combines the proverbial minuteness of the German scholar and the critical spirit of the genuine scientist with the fiery enthusiasm of an admiring disciple. Dr. Volkmann is the first who has treated exhaustively Dante's relation to art, and has traced and analysed the influence he has exerted on successive generations of artists.

At first sight it may seem very strange that amongst the many thousands of volumes which make up the ever-growing Dante literature, not one author shou'd have taken up this important problem. For indeed Dante's relation to art—*i.e.*, the pictorial and plastic construction of the "Divine Comedy"—is so forcible that it does not escape the most superficial reader. Not only is Dante's influence on some of the great masters (Giotto, Botticelli, Signorelli, Michelangelo, Rossetti) a commonplace in the history of art, but every tercet of the Comedy is instinct with the artistic spirit. Dante's intensity of vision, his power of reproducing with almost photographic definiteness the most vanishing shades of light, the most minute details of landscape,—this faculty is almost unparalleled in the whole range of literature. Never was there a poet who possessed to an equal degree the eye of the painter. Never was there a poet who used with the same "virtuosity" the visible world of light and shadow to reach and to reveal the invisible world of feeling and thought. Never was there a genius blending so harmoniously the objectivity of plastic art with the subjectivity of passion and the faculty of abstraction of the philosopher. Whether Dante, the friend of Giotto and Oderisi d'Agubbio, did possess or did not possess a talent for drawing—as seems indicated by a famous passage from the "Vita Nuova," quoted by Dr. Volkmann—is in itself of very little importance; one thing is certain, Dante, from the constitutional bent of his genius, is the brother of the giant painters of the Cinquecento. It is something more than a metaphor when we say that Dante is the Michelangelo of poetry, as Michelangelo is the Dante of painting. The "Divine Comedy" is not only the *summa* of all the wisdom of his time, it is not only a chronicle of local and general history, it is, moreover, a marvellous gallery of pictures and a museum of sculpture. As you struggle down the abyss of Hell or up the mountain of Purgatory,

as you are borne up to the celestial spheres, you not only feel the sufferings and passions, you not only try to conceive the profound and subtle disquisitions, theological and scientific, you *see* all the scenes of the mysterious world with absolute distinctness, a distinctness of vision almost amounting to hallucination. How many single verses one could quote which stamp for ever on the memory either some attitude of the body or some expression of the face! What could sculpture add to the attitude which the poet has given to Sordello—

“Solo sguardando  
A guisa di leon quando si posa”?

What could the most dramatic picture add to the expression of Farinata looking around him—

“Come avesse lo inferno in gran dispetto”?

Who could forget the attitude of Belacqua, sitting prostrate, his face hidden between his knees, “as if laziness were his sister”—

“Che se pigrizia fosse sua siròcchia”?

So far, then, the relation of the Comedy to modern art seems certain, obvious, and simple, not less so than the relation of the “Iliad” and the “Odyssey” to ancient art. Indeed, it seems possible to assert *a priori* that the poem *must* have inspired generations of artists. But when we consider the problem more closely, we at once perceive the enormous difficulties in the way of a satisfactory solution. Not to speak of the immense amount of labour involved (which will strike all readers of Dr. Volkmann), how is it possible in any degree to estimate the material influence of the poet on the painter, except when the painter sets it as his special task to illustrate the poem? Could it even be proved that the painter

has directly borrowed his subject matter from the poet, this would mean very little, for in painting as in art generally the subject matter is as nothing compared with the execution. But even this borrowing of the subject matter cannot be proved. The subjects treated by Dante, the visions of Hell and Purgatory and Paradise, are so universal, they are so much the common property of the Christian world, that it is almost impossible to prove, and still less to gauge the influence Dante may have exerted. Even where there exists the closest similarity between the work of the poet and the work of the painter, this similarity may be explained not by any influence of the one over the other, but by the identity of the subject. Dr. Volkmann supplies us with a striking instance. It has always been assumed that Dante has exerted a profound influence on Giotto: and no doubt the spiritual influence must have been enormous, but such spiritual influence cannot be traced; and as for any material influence, Dr. Volkmann has no difficulty in proving that wherever a material imitation by Giotto was admitted, and an influence by Dante, not of spirit, but of treatment, such imitation and such influence are purely imaginary.

Dr. Volkmann's book has not only settled definitely a most interesting historical enquiry, but has raised an ever-fascinating æsthetical problem—the fundamental problem of Lessing's "Laocoon." What are the respective limitations and provinces of literature and art in general, of poetry and the arts of design in particular? How far, and under what conditions, is it possible for the painter to compete with the poet in the same subjects? And whenever rivalry is possible, who is to gain the victory? And in the struggle between the author of the "Divine Comedy" and the artists who tried to embody his creations, who *did* gain the victory? The *ICONOGRAFIA DANTESCA* supplies us with a definite



answer. Most of the artists who tried to follow the Comedy failed, and were doomed to fail, both from the limitations of their art and from the nature of the subjects. In most cases the painter is limited, and limits the spectator, by the forms he creates; the poet soars above his creations, and creates in the reader a world of visions and thoughts beyond those expressed. Never was this more true than in the case of Dante. Even the most objective, the most pictorial passages in the Comedy are more remarkable from what they *suggest* than from what they explicitly state. Every tercet is symbolical, every verse is pregnant with a deeper and more spiritual meaning, and sets at work the imagination of the reader, which would have remained in passive contemplation before the same subject represented in painting. Hence the significant fact pointed out by Dr. Volkmann, that only those artists succeeded in rendering something of the spirit of the Comedy, who, like Botticelli, reduced to a minimum the limitations of painting, and by subordinating colour to design and freedom of outline to composition, tried to reproduce something of the suggestiveness of the poet, leaving full play to the imagination of the spectator.

CHARLES SAROLEA.

## PREFACE.



THE title *ICONOGRAFIA DANTESCA* ought of itself clearly to denote the scope and intention of my book ; and it will not fail to suggest itself to every friend and connoisseur of Dante literature that I, in choosing this title, have had in mind Colomb de Batines' exhaustive work, "*Bibliografia Dantesca*." In this book, too, I wish to deal as comprehensively as possible with a clearly defined subject, which, in spite of much good work, has not yet been exhaustively treated. I may be pardoned for calling the book a Dante Iconography, although it is concerned only with the "*Divine Comedy*," since the range of pictorial representation hardly extends over the whole work of the poet.

As early as 1892 I published a short dissertation on this same subject, which, however, only brought the enquiry to the close of the Renaissance, and was therefore naturally limited in its scope. Although I have made this my basis, I am now able to present a considerably greater amount of material, as I did not previously turn to account all that I had accumulated ; and I have, in addition, taken the opportunity to visit England and France in the interval. The continuation from the Renaissance to the present time is entirely new. My endeavour, however, has not been to attain the completeness of a catalogue, but rather to present as comprehensive a picture as possible of the evolution through the centuries of the artistic interpretation of a powerful poem, and to show how each age and nation has abstracted its own spirit and sentiment from the poem or has infused them into it.

LUDWIG VOLKMANN.

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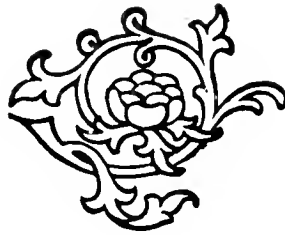
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## INTRODUCTION.

### *Dante's Personal Relation to Art and his Personality in Art.*



EXT to the Bible the "Divine Comedy" ranks as the book which has been translated into almost every living language and has furnished artists with subjects for interpretation as diverse as they are numerous. This latter fact should of itself lead us to suspect the existence of some secret and intimate connection between the poet and the poem

on the one hand and plastic art on the other, and urge us to an inquiry into the nature of this relationship, of its mutual interactions, and of its visible and invisible results.

Indeed, it is no chance circumstance that Dante continually attracted artists into his domain, for there was in him much of the nature of the artist. Goethe, after the perusal of the "Divine Comedy," wrote of him: "He saw objects so distinctly with the eye of his imagination that he could reflect them with clear-cut outlines, and thus it is that we see the most abstract and strange conceptions range themselves before us as if drawn after nature." The question at once arises whether the poet was himself a draughtsman; and in truth even this gift does not seem to have been withheld from him, as an oft-cited passage in his "Vita Nuova" (Venice, Edition 1785, p. 44) hints. There he says: "Da quel giorno nel quale si compiva l'anno che quella

Donna—Beatrice—era fatta delle cittadine della vita eterna, io mi sedeva in parte nella quale ricordandomi di lei io disegnava un angelo sopra certe tavolette.” The Aretinian Leonardo Bruni also, who wrote the life of Dante about the middle of the fifteenth century, says in his account of him: “Dilettossi di musica, e di suoni; e di sua mano egregiamente disegnava”; and, speaking of the battle of Campaldino, he says: “Questa battaglia racconta Dante in una sua epistola, e dice esservi stato a combattere, e disegna la forma della battaglia.” But, above all, the poet was in close personal sympathy with the most remarkable artists of his time; indeed, a bond of sincere and heartfelt friendship existed between him and the greatest among them—Giotto. A strange friendship indeed was that between the founder of a new art and the creator of a new literature; and, as imperishable memorials of the bond, we have on the one hand Dante’s portrait, from the hand of Giotto, in the Bargello, on the other the famous lines in the eleventh canto of the *Purgatorio*:

“Credette Cimabue nella pittura  
Tener lo campo, ed ora ha Giotto il grido,  
Sì che la fama di colui oscura.”

Janitschek, in his essay on the “Art of Dante and Giotto,” has summed up with great suggestiveness the poet’s artistic doctrine, gathered from various passages of his works, in the following short phrases: “The beauty of created things is the emanation of the original source of beauty, which is God. The more brilliantly the thought of God is reflected by the things of earth, the more beautiful are they; but since, according to Thomas Aquinas, things are true only in so far as they are in harmony with the preconceived thoughts of God, their beauty is also their truth. The activity of the artist is the analogue to the creative activity of God. The art-creative mood springs from inspiration, and from this proceeds the artistic conception. The artist can describe only that which he is capable of experiencing within his own breast. Truth is the highest aim of the artist. The work of art always falls short of the artistic intention.” A

man with views so clear and, if we consider his time, so modern upon the essence, aims, and means of art could not help exerting a fruitful influence upon the mind even of the greatest artist, especially when the latter was so intimately bound up with him as Giotto was. Thus we find that numerous anecdotes have been preserved which prove that Dante exerted a direct influence on Giotto, and which, even if they are not always verbally accurate, yet are no doubt correct in their general tendency. For example, Benvenuto da Imola affirms that Giotto painted his Paduan frescoes at the direct suggestion of the poet; and Vasari relates that he painted, in S. Chiara at Naples, scenes from the Apocalypse which “furono, per quanto si dice, invenzione di Dante, come per avventura furono anco quelle tanto lodate di Ascesi (Assisi), delle quali si è di sopra abbastanza favellato; e sebben Dante in questo tempo era morto, potevano averne avuto, come spesso avviene fra gli amici, ragionamento.”

Besides Giotto and Cimabue, Dante mentions other artists also in terms of praise—*e.g.*, Franco Bolognese, the miniaturist Oderisi, “Agubbio’s Pride”; and a large number of metaphors and similes, culled from the domain of art, make it evident that the poet was quite familiar therewith. Perhaps, however, the sublime purity of his conception of the aim and effect of art is best shown in the tenth canto of the *Purgatorio*, where marble-reliefs representing emblems of humility are set before the eyes of the proud, so exquisitely that “not only Polykletus, but Nature herself, must feel ashamed.”

If, then, Dante’s personal relation to art stands in the clearest light before our gaze, Dante’s personality in art—the question whether his features have been handed down to us with the exactitude of a portrait or not—is still a debatable matter, and will, I believe, ever remain so; for no positive evidence can be adduced from any side, and it must therefore be left to the individual’s own feeling, in the last resource, to decide what opinion he will favour. Personally, it seems to me that the over-conscientious doubters deprive themselves of a spiritual possession. Granted that it is in the highest degree doubtful

whether the Bargello picture is really the work of Giotto; granted, that is, whether it is so much injured that no argument based upon it has any value; granted, further, that it has never been proved that dead-masks were in use at the time of Dante;—granted all this, ought it not to be permissible to us to accept our Dante ideal, as it has been handed down from age to age, as a matter beyond argument, and to identify it in our minds with the poet's portrait? Does not Charlemagne remain for the artist the well-favoured, blue-eyed hero with the blonde beard, as painted by Dürer, whether the much-disputed bronze equestrian statue is genuine or no? Here especially, as we wish to approach the poet's work from the artistic standpoint, we cannot allow ourselves to be deprived of his portrait until a better is offered in its stead: the features in profile; the nose with its bold sweep; the fine, beardless mouth with the rather projecting under-lip; the large, earnest eyes; withal the well-known head-covering, or a sprig of laurel on his temples;—these are the characteristic traits by which we are accustomed at once to recognise Dante's likeness: indeed, so far as art is concerned, that *is* Dante.

In what follows I have no hesitation in speaking of the poet's portrait as definitely fixed. Even in our historically disposed age any artist would hardly dream of depicting him otherwise. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, to be sure, artists were not so particular; and thus it happens that among the infinitely varied descriptions of the poet which date from this early period only a very few can lay claim to the likeness of a portrait or even to any clear individualisation. The miniaturist, for example, who embodied the scenes of the poem on parchment or paper had to introduce into almost every picture the figure of Dante either as a speaker, an actor, or a spectator. How, then, was he depicted? Sometimes tall, sometimes small; now bearded, now beardless; with the well-known cap, or without it, or perchance with some other head-covering; the features, as a rule, of an ordinary, meaningless type. Scarcely ever do we find anything approaching to a trace of the characteristic profile! His dress is always a

long, folding garment, often with a huge collar attached; usually it is of a blue or violet hue, in many cases with a golden hem.

We may perhaps conclude that this indifference with regard to the features of the poet sprang for the most part from the fact that the illustrator was forced to depict Dante over and over again in the same codex, and did not wish to trouble himself about presenting every time an individual representation. But we are amazed to find the same phenomenon even in manuscripts in which a portrait of Dante is the only pictorial decoration.\* We see him there often, sitting at his writing-desk or brooding over that volume in his hand, but with no indication of our ideal Dante or hint at portrait accuracy. The initial at the beginning of this section, taken from MS. 313 of the National Library at Florence (Palatina), and dating from the first half of the fourteenth century, may serve as an example of this. Even the monumental relief from the hand of Pietro Lombardi, which adorns his tomb at Ravenna, is closely related to this type of miniature, and is absolutely wanting in sharp characterisation and depth of conception.

The reasons for this fact, which is at first sight so astonishing, are manifold. It might be said that there was no means of obtaining any clear idea of the poet's appearance, but this would be true only outside Florence, and even then only at a very early date; yet by far the larger proportion of manuscripts are of Tuscan origin. That likeness was not striven after might indeed hold for the Trecento, since the sense of real accuracy

\* Several of these may be named: Paris, Bibl. Nationale, Ital. 79, fourteenth century (Batines, 424); Rome, Bibl. Angelica, S. 2, 9, fourteenth century (Batines, 358); Bologna, Bibl. Comunitativa, dated 1380; Rome, Vaticana, No. 3200, end of fourteenth century (Batines, II. 327); Rome, Bibl. Chigiana, L., VIII. 294, beginning of fifteenth century (Batines, 382); Rome, Barberiniana, XLV. 69, beginning of fifteenth century (Batines, 369); Florence, Laurenziana, Plut. 40, No. 37, dated 1417 (Batines, 58); Paris, Bibl. Nationale, Ital. 70, fifteenth century (Batines, 435); Florence, Riccardiana, 1038, fifteenth century (Batines, 154); ditto, 1045, middle of fifteenth century (Batines, 139); Venice, Marciana, Class IX., No. 33, dated 1446; Cividale (Friuli), Bibl. Clarecini, dated 1466 (Batines, 310); Florence, Nazionale, Magl. palch. I., No. 31, dated 1467 (Batines, 112); London, Brit. Museum, Lansdowne, 839, end of fifteenth century (Batines, 482).

in portraiture only arose and became the common property of artists with the Quattrocento. Technical incapacity, in short, and execution by artisans must certainly be assumed to be the chief causes. This is proved by the fact that in the work of the best artists the portrait of Dante is true to life and full of expression. And here we are not speaking of Botticelli and Signorelli—for there is too great a distance between the level of an ordinary book illustrator and these great masters; but even in the illustrated manuscripts there are here and there carefully drawn and accurate portraits. Excellent examples of this are offered by a full-page pen drawing in a manuscript of the National Library of Florence (Palatina, B.A. 2, p. 3, No. 10; reproduced by F. X. Kraus, fig. 7), and a very handsome half-length portrait, also occupying a full page, executed in body-colour, in Codex 1040 of the Riccardiana, Florence (reproduced in Baron Locella's "Dante in German Art," and by Kraus, fig. 10). The latter portrait was, by many critics, ascribed to Giotto, but without any positive evidence; and in 1865 it was used by Dupré, at the order of the Italian Government, as the model for a memorial medallion, to be executed by him on the occasion of the centenary celebrations in honour of the poet.

Another fact of particular interest which we must not overlook here is the appearance in the illustrated manuscripts of the bearded Dante, which is otherwise only met with in some of the Venetian wood-cut editions of the sixteenth century. We cannot help being reminded of the description of Dante's external appearance, as given by Boccaccio in his "Life of Dante" (Venice, 1825, p. 54): "This poet of ours was, then, of mediocre stature; and since he had arrived at mature age, his gait was slightly stooping and his bearing grave and decorous. Most becomingly dressed, he was always clothed in a gown which was suitable to his mature age; his countenance was long, his nose aquiline, his eyes rather large if anything, his cheeks big, and his upper lip projected somewhat over the under; his complexion was brown, his hair and beard thick, black, and crisp, and his face always wore a melancholy and thoughtful expression. One



day he happened to be in Verona,—for the fame of his works, and chiefly of that part of his Comedy entitled the *Inferno*, was already spread far and wide, and the latter was known to many men and ladies,—and as he was passing before a porch where some ladies were seated, one of these said softly—yet so that he and his companion could make out clearly the import—to the other ladies, ‘Do you see yon one who penetrates the *Inferno*, returns when he pleases, and brings hither news of those who are there below?’ To which one of them replied naïvely, ‘Of a truth thou sayest well. Do you not see how his beard is crisp and his complexion brown by reason of the heat and smoke down there?’ Hearing these words spoken behind his back, and knowing that they expressed the firm belief of the ladies, he was charmed; and, quite delighted that they held him in such esteem, he passed on with something like a smile on his face.” From this, as well as from the passage so often cited (though usually in a metaphorical sense) in the thirty-first canto of the *Purgatorio*, where Beatrice says to Dante, “*alza la barba*,” many have inferred that the poet, at least for a time, must have worn a beard. The fact that we see him so often in the manuscripts drawn with a beard should give the champions of this view further support.

In the earliest printed Dante illustrations also, one would in most cases not recognise the poet if one was not aware that he was represented. The draughtsmen or the engravers—or was it the publishers?—felt the deficiency, and added frequently an explanatory “D,” sometimes the entire name even, to the figure. With the commencement of the Cinquecento the Dante likeness which still holds the field to-day was with few exceptions generally received. There is here consequently no need to describe the mass of portraits by means of which artists have sought to immortalise the poet’s features both in marble and on canvas. Besides, a complete catalogue is to be found in De Batines’ “*Bibliografia Dantesca*” and in other competent works.

For this reason I will only mention one picture, which, quite

alone of its kind, shows a life-size likeness of Dante combined with an attempt to illustrate the "Divine Comedy." This is the work of Domenico di Michelino, and consists of a large oil-painting on wood, executed in 1465, by order of the Operai, for the cathedral at Florence, where it is still to be seen in the left aisle. The picture—for which a sketch by Alesso Baldovinetti served as basis—shows Dante standing in the centre, almost full-face, with his red garment, cap, and laurel chaplet. In his left hand he holds his open book, on whose pages the introductory lines of his poem may be read. With his other hand he points to Hell, which occupies the left side of the picture. Nearest him is the portal; behind is a troop of souls, conducted by a devil carrying a banner and tormented with wasps, as in the third canto of the *Inferno*. In the background rises into view the Mount of Purification with its seven ledges; in the middle sits the angel guarding the door; and in the separate divisions are the souls in different degrees of purification; while the summit is crowned by the earthly Paradise, where Adam and Eve sit in glory. Paradise is merely suggested by an arc in the sky bespangled with stars; and the right-hand side of the picture, otherwise unoccupied, is taken up with an interesting representation of the city of Florence. We recognise the Bargello, the tower of S. Firenze, the cathedral with its cupola and campanile, and the Palazzo Vecchio. The inscription underneath runs:

"Qui coelum cecinit mediumque inumque tribunal  
 Lustravitque animo cuncta poeta suo—  
 Doctus adest Dantes sua quem Florentia saepe  
 Sensit consiliis ac pietate patrem.  
 Nil potuit tanto mors saeva nocere poetae  
 Quem vivum virtus, carmen, imago facit."

This picture, indeed, which is reproduced by Bassermann—"Dante's Spuren in Italien," Plate 2, by Kraus, fig. 8—and by Ricci in the new edition of "Dante" now being published by Hoepli in Milan, has a very especial iconographical interest; for it is the sole picture of an early time which gives a distinctly individualised portrait of Dante, together with scenes

from his poem. For centuries the example set by this picture was not followed; in the nineteenth century, for the first time, do we meet with real easel pictures with artistically rounded off and detached scenes of the "Divine Comedy," pictures of which the "Dante's Bark" of Delacroix is perhaps the most famous. Michelino's picture must have enjoyed a certain prestige even among his contemporaries. In the fifteenth century a plate was prepared from it by an unknown hand, of which a copy is to be found in the Court Library at Vienna; another, unfortunately coarsely coloured, is pasted inside the cover of the Codex Stroziano (No. 148 of the Laurenziana at Florence).\* The print gives, though with a certain freedom and much technical awkwardness, all the essential features of the picture; the words beneath it are altered to run: "DANTE ALLEGHIERI POETA FIORENTINO CONALTO INGEGNO EL CIELO ELPVRGHATORO · ET · ILREGNO INFERNO ALMEZO · DEL · CAMINO · DINOSTRA · VITA · POSE INBEL · LAVORO · QVAL NEDIMOSTRA · IL POEMA · DIVINO." Further, a bronze medal of the second half of the fifteenth century was in all probability influenced by this picture, since it bears on its reverse the same motives, except that it omits the view of the town, while its obverse shows a bust of Dante in profile.† In our century even, the picture has exercised stimulative power: A. Stürler prefaces his "Forty Drawings of the Inferno," in 1859, with a free copy of it.

The method of the primitive painter of the fifteenth century has been followed, in the domain of sculpture, by a modern Italian artist, and with the happiest result. In his Dante monument, unveiled in 1896 at Trent, in the Tyrol, Cesare Zocchi has with great effect accompanied a portrait of Dante with scenes from the poem. The bronze figure of the poet

\* Passavant, V., No. 101, where, as in Meyer's "Künstler-Lexikon," it appears among the "Baldini" prints. Published by the Chalkographical Society, 1889, No. 7, and by Kraus, fig. 9.

† A copy is in the Berlin Münzkabinet. It is reproduced in Kopisch's translation, Berlin, 1887, and also on the title-page of Fulgoni's edition, Rome, 1791.

stands on a stone pedestal, divided into three tiers, on which other bronze figures are placed. The front side of the base shows the gloomy judge of the lower world seated on a monster; in the middle tier we see Dante and Virgil, surrounded by the despairing souls of Hell and the expectant souls of Purgatory; while the upper division is adorned with the figure of Beatrice, with praying angels hovering round her. These pictorial groups, so far from overweighting the main figure, are harmonious accompaniments to it, with their wealth of beautiful plastic motives. The work is thus raised above the ordinary run of Dante statues, and may indeed be reckoned among the best modern achievements of Italian sculpture.

The "divine poet's" likeness has quite imperceptibly made us acquainted with a few illustrations to his work. Let us now proceed to these illustrations themselves.





## PART I.

### *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.*



## CHAPTER I.

### THE LAST JUDGMENT.



THE end of all things, the pains of the damned and the joys of the blessed, occupy a very important place in Italian art, and no traveller can fail to notice the extraordinarily numerous and powerful fresco scenes in the Italian churches which treat of the Last Day, of Hell, and of Paradise. The intimate relationship of this subject with parts of the "Divine Comedy" has accordingly led many of the earlier enthusiastic worshippers of Dante so far astray as to affirm that the poet's influence is discoverable in almost every description of the Judgment, and indeed to set these pictures among the works of art which owe their birth to the "Divine Comedy"; thus in the occasionally excellent treatises of Selvatico, Mella, Ferrazzi, Klein, Ampère, and others, the pictures of the Last Judgment play a large part, while the illustrated manuscripts are scarcely ever mentioned. Later investigators, such as Springer, Scartazzini, Jessen, are here more critical; but in spite of this it seems not superfluous to show with the aid of some examples how cautious one must be in assuming the direct influence of Dante on such productions.

The first artist to be named must be Dante's great contemporary, Giotto—the oldest in point of time, and likewise

the most frequently cited example of an influence of the "Divine Comedy" on plastic art. The close personal relations of the two masters, of which we spoke in the Introduction, made it appear probable that traces of Dante would reward investigators of the Judgment plates of Giotto, especially as Vasari had hinted at such a connection. And what was sought for was found; whether truly or no, the following will show.

Thrice over Giotto has chosen the Last Day as the subject for a large wall-painting: in the Palazzo del Podestà (Bargello) at Florence, in the Cappella dell' Arena at Padua, and in S. Chiara at Naples. The last work—a series of scenes from the Apocalypse, of which Vasari asserts that they were the "invenzione di Dante"—is now lost beneath whitewash, and we must therefore confine our attention to the remaining two. It is chronologically an impossibility that the picture in the Bargello was influenced by Dante's poem; for Giotto painted in Florence about the year 1300—*i.e.*, before the poet had even begun his work. The famous portrait of the youthful Dante, which he placed among the Blessed Ones, proves that his mind did revert to his friend; but so far as the rest goes, in his presentation of Hell and of Heaven—which are both in a sad state of preservation—he adheres strictly to conventional lines.

The widespread belief that Giotto painted in Padua under the direct influence of the poet is distinctly more probable, for Benvenuto da Imola testifies in his commentary that Dante was present there at the time: "Accidit autem semel, quod dum Giottus pingeret Paduae, adhuc satis juvenis, unam capellam in loco, ubi fuit olim theatrum sive arena, Dantes pervenit in locum. Quem Giottus honorifice receptum duxit ad domum suam" (Muratori, "Antiquitates Medii Aevi," Milan, 1738, Vol. I., p. 1186). But if we regard the work itself (Bassermann, Plate 6) we find the case to be similar to that of the Florentine frescoes. The rows of angels, apostles and saints as set down by Giotto are to be found in the oldest descriptions of Paradise, nor did he require the inspiration of the "Divine Comedy" for his

representation of Hell. Fire and serpents composed, long before the time of Dante, the essential constituents of the torments of Hell in the fancy of the Italian people; and the characteristic figure of Satan—the devourer of the sinners—is also of very early origin. Comparison with the cupola mosaics in the Florentine Baptistery (Bassermann, Plate 7), which date from the thirteenth century, proves this quite sufficiently. Even the sinners who are tormented by snakes or mangled and mutilated offer reminiscences of Dante which are merely superficial, and arise from the nature of the subject. On the other hand, an essential difference between Giotto's Hell and Dante's Nether-world is Giotto's conception of Hell in its entirety as a stream of fire which flows from the left hand of the Judge of the universe—a conception directly traceable to older Byzantine prototypes.

The Paduan fresco is, then, certainly not an echo of the "Divine Comedy," and if Dante and Giotto are to be constantly grouped together as formerly, this must be done from another point of view. Anton Springer has stated this very clearly in his "*Bilder aus der neueren Kunstgeschichte*" (Vol. II., p. 402). "It is a common tendency," he writes, "to seek to set together for the sake of comparison the great poets and writers of any age, and to suggest that their fashions of thinking and feeling are reflected in contemporary works of art. That would be very creditable to the latter; but it seldom happens, except in the case of illustrations to works of poetry. An experience in our own times should warn us to caution. It was considered a sure fact that the Düsseldorf painters received their inspiration from Uhland's poems. The subjects of representation and the tone of the description made a direct dependence of the painter on the poet very probable. Now we are told by a very trustworthy authority that the Düsseldorf romanticists did not know Uhland's poems, and composed their pictures quite independently. It is evident that we must go further back still, and assume a common basis for both poet and painter. The same holds true of former centuries. Dante and Giotto, commonly named in the same breath, were not connected in

such a way that Giotto attached himself directly to the poet and borrowed separate ideas from him. It is quite conceivable, however, that both seized on ideas which were in accord with popular feeling, and imparted to them poetic form and artistic shape." When we consider the matter in this light, however, Giotto's allegorical plinth figures in the Cappella dell' Arena, for example, or his grand allegories in S. Francesco at Assisi, contain far more of the spirit of Dante than the two representations of the Last Judgment, despite the external relationship of subject.

A striking example of the small amount of accuracy and research which has been sufficient to establish alleged influences of Dante is the large fresco of Hell in the Campo Santo at Pisa (Bassermann, Plate 3), which, formerly attributed to Orcagna, is now mostly assigned to the Sienese Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti. The whole is divided by stone piers into sections, but this arrangement had been usual before Dante's time. Satan certainly is here a hairy monster which swallows sinners with its triple jaws. Among the doomed, too, we find some who mutually lacerate each other or are fettered with snakes; and besides these, there are many other features which also appear in Dante. For example, there is among the sinners one who holds his head "in guisa di lanterna" in his hand, and another whose body is ripped so that the entrails hang out; in these, critics have seen Bertram de Born and Mahomet, and have considered that the connection with the "Divine Comedy" was as good as proved. If closer attention had been given to the matter, there would have been discovered on the ribbon—which the alleged Bertram de Born waves like a standard—the inscription, "Ariano heretico ogni altro," and close to the so-called Mahomet the annotation, "Simoniaci." Mahomet, on the contrary, lies here bound on the ground, specified by his turban and the annotation "Maometto," while Dante represents him in the above mutilated condition. The punishment of the seers is also different from that in the "Comedy": there we see them with their faces turned upwards; here we find, as the betokening sign of their mental infatuation, that their eyes are surrounded with snakes. There are also in



the picture numerous punishments which find no place in Dante, and are taken rather from the traditional, hideously fantastic Hell; for example, there is a man roasting on the spit, another who is being sawn asunder, a miser into whose mouth liquid metal is being poured, chained gluttons seated before a well-garnished table, and many more. The Hell of the Campo Santo at Pisa must, then, be struck out of the list of pictures which are traceable to the "Comedy." I do not seek to deny that it has been the outcome of similar cycles of ideas, and throws many an interesting sidelight on Dante's world of thought; but this has nothing to do with the present consideration. It may be mentioned that the Pisan fresco has suffered essential injuries in course of time, and has been subjected to restorations in part capricious. As early as 1379 it had to be restored by Cecco di Piero, because it had been disfigured by schoolchildren (Morrone, "*Pisa Illustrata*," II., p. 243); and according to Vasari, it was restored in 1530 by Solazzino, without much regard to its nature. Still, before this retouching, an interesting engraving was made which gives us some idea of the original; it is reproduced in Morrone ("*Pisa Illustrata*," I., p. 239), as well as by the Chalkographical Society (Passavant, "*Peintre-Graveur*," V., p. 43, No. 102). This print, which is commonly ascribed to the mysterious Baccio Baldini, has, as a matter of fact, in the under portion deviations from the fresco, yet a note on the upper edge of the page distinctly names the prototype: "QUESTO · ELINFERNO · DEL · CHÂPOSANTO · DI · PISA."

Two other plates from the "Baldini" group are almost exactly the same as this—namely, the Hell, from a book published in 1472 by Nicolo di Lorenzo Dellamagna, entitled "*El monte sancto di Dio*" (Bartsch, XIII., p. 190, No. 59; reproduced in Reid's "*Early Italian Engravings*"), and the Judecca (Bartsch, XIII., p. 90, No. 8); and lastly we find the very same Hell in the "*Judgment Day*" (Bartsch, XIII., p. 268, No. 23, reproduced by the Chalkographical Society, 1890, No. 6), of which it occupies the right-hand side. These prints prove in the most striking manner that in the fifteenth

century "L' Inferno del Camposanto di Pisa" was at the very least as popular in art as was "L' Inferno di Dante"; hence the assumption seems justifiable that a painter, in all likelihood at the express wish of his patron, modelled himself on this famous piece when he had to depict the end of the world, while in a later age certainly the widely distributed copper prints often served for a pattern. If the Hell of the "Divine Comedy," then, did not penetrate the whole field of art—if we find, indeed, in a Dante manuscript of the year 1456 a full-page miniature with the usual traditional, meaningless representation of Hell, as in the Codex Plut. 40, No. 1, of the Laurenziana—I shall be justified, I think, in ascribing to the renown of the Pisa picture no trifling influence on this development.

The large representation of Hell in the Cappella Bolognini in S. Petronio at Bologna, which dates from the commencement of the fifteenth century, shows a close resemblance to the fresco at Pisa (Kraus, fig. 75). The artist is unknown; formerly the critics, following Vasari, ascribed it to Buffalmaco—a chronological impossibility, for Buffalmaco died in 1336; according to Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Antonio Alberti of Ferrara is the painter of the picture, a copy of which is to be found in the Academy of Bologna. Here also we notice countless seeming imitations of Dante, which, however, vanish on nearer examination. A sinner who holds his head in his hand, as with Bertram de Born in Dante, is called Dathan; near him we can see Abiron, who entered with him into a conspiracy against Moses and Aaron. Men whose bodies are ripped open are meant to represent the desecrators of the temple, as the word *sacralescy* shows, not the instigators of discord, as with the poet. Mahomet, on the other hand, lies, worried by serpents, on the ground. On the right, at the top, a devil is carrying by the legs one of the damned, whom he has pitched on to his back head downwards. Involuntarily one's thoughts revert to the Elder of Lucca in the twenty-first canto of the Inferno, whom a devil throws, in like manner, into the seething pitch; but the note names him Simon Magus, while, in the

"Comedy," the Simonists stand in circular holes, their feet licked painfully by the flames. Satan himself is not the Satan of Dante: he has only one face, has no wings, and is bound with chains to the rocks. Lastly, there are a number of torments of the most varied description which Dante does not mention. In the same manner one could analyse the whole picture; throughout, the connections are only apparent, proceeding from similar conceptions, but there is no real imitation of the poet. The very wording of the will of Bartolomeo Bolognini, further, in which, on February 10th, 1408, the latter ordered that this picture should be painted, does not warrant the supposition that Dante's *Inferno* was so much as thought of; for it runs: "*pingi debeat penas infernales horribiles quantum plus potest.*" The *Paradise*, which occupies the opposite wall, consists of a quite traditional Coronation of Mary, surrounded by bands of angels and saints, and has, as usual, no even apparent relation to Dante.

In the case of Taddeo Bartoli (d. 1410) one might perhaps surmise some connection with Dante; of his work there remain the great frescoes of Hell and Paradise in the Dome of San Gimignano. Vasari, however, speaks as follows of a work precisely similar, but now lost, which this artist painted in Monte Oliveto: "*Intorno al 1394, lavorò in Volterra certe tavole a tempera; ed in Monte Oliveto una tavola, e nel muro un Inferno a fresco, nel quale seguì l' invenzione di Dante, quanto attiene alla divisione de' peccati e forma delle pene, ma nel sito o non seppe, o non potette, o non volle imitarlo.*" But the great fresco of San Gimignano, divided into three parts, is likewise very different from Dante's Hell, and represents, among other things, a sinner being sawn asunder, a covered table surrounded by famishing people, the yawning jaws of Hell which gobble up the sinners, and many other traditional torments, sometimes thought out with the most nauseous delight.

After such examples it is superfluous to investigate more minutely the many other representations of the Last Judgment, and especially of Hell, which in the same manner are still

always included in a catalogue of "Works of Dantian Art," but which do not show, in any one case, so much outward connection with the "Divine Comedy" as the frescoes in Pisa and Bologna. Most of these frescoes have, besides, very little artistic value; and many of them—as, for example, in S. Francesco in Rimini, and in Volano in the Etschthal—are now whitewashed over. As far as the latter are concerned it is perhaps a pity, on account of their connection with the "Divine Comedy"; for an old writer says of them that they are so faithfully painted after Dante's Hell that it would appear as if the poet had himself provided the drawings for them.\* Or should we, remembering the usual superficiality of such accounts, refuse to put any trust in this statement?

Just as with the frescoes so it is with the panel pictures of the Last Judgment; and specially the pious Fra Angelico da Fiesole has, without good cause, been brought forward as connected with Dante. His pictures which treat of this subject (Florence, Uffizi and Academy; Rome, Corsini Gallery; Berlin, Royal Museum), and in which the procession of angels and saints is so charmingly conceived, present in other respects quite a conventional arrangement; and Hell especially shows only very faint reminiscences of older prototypes (Bassermann, Plate 4). To paint the horrible accorded so little with the gentle character of Fra Angelico that Hell, in his rendering, is consigned to a modest little place in the right-hand corner.

The same applies to the twelve-sided picture of the Last Judgment which hangs in the first corridor of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (No. 55), and is the work of an unknown, very mediocre Tuscan painter of the fifteenth century. The want of connection with Dante and the dependence on the type of the Pisa picture are specially striking in this specimen.

A fresco of the year 1515 even, which is to be seen in the church of SS. Giacomo and Filippo, near Valvasone in Friuli, painted by Pietro di San Vito, gives quite the traditional

\* Mariani, "Relazione del Tirolo," quoted by Tartarotti, "Memorie antiche di Roveredo," Venice, 1754.

Inferno and Paradiso, while, strange to say, the Mount of Purification, with its tiers of steps and ledges and the crowds of souls thereon, is exactly modelled after the "Comedy." Although this unimportant picture was not produced until the Cinquecento, it was better to mention it here.

Giovanni di Paolo's Last Judgment, on the other hand (a picture which forms the Predella of an altar-piece, of the year 1453, in the Academy at Siena), deserves special consideration. Apart from Fra Angelico's pictures, it is the only painting in which we find the delicate greeting and embracing of the angels and saints; indeed, it is hardly open to doubt that Fra Angelico was the direct prototype in this case. The Predella, the chief picture of which is signed, "OPVS · IOHANNIS · PAVLI · DE · SENIS · MCCCCLIII · DIE · III · DECEBRE," exhibits, it is true, motives which can perhaps be explained only by an acquaintance with Dante's poem: reclining souls, on which descend flakes of fire; souls engaged in biting themselves, and a group of two sinners, one of whom bites the other's head as Ugolino bites Roger; souls swimming in water, others scourged by a demon or riven by the claws of a monster; at the entrance to Hell a devil with wings and a tail, with which he—a frequent misunderstanding—embraces a sinner, while before him are two souls—evidently Minos; lastly, sinners rolling heavy stones. At the same time there are considerable deviations: the usual spread table, a soul ridden by a devil, and particularly, in the lower right-hand corner, a man who is pecked in the ribs by an eagle, like Prometheus. A wonderful conglomeration of the old Hell of tradition, of the Inferno of Dante, and the Hades of the ancients! We can, then, speak only of single motives and reminiscences of Dante even in this interesting picture, not of a hard and fast representation of the poet's Hell. There remains now to be considered only one picture, in the narrower sense, which preserves a very close connection with the "Comedy"—namely, the fresco of Bernardo Orcagna in Florence (Bassermann, Plate 1; Kraus, fig. 74). In S. Maria Novella the Cappella Strozzi was

decorated by the brothers Orcagna; the younger brother Andrea (d. 1368) produced the Judgment and the Paradise; the elder, Bernardo, oftenest called Nardo (d. 1365), the Hell. This latter is so true to Dante even in trifling particularities that the magnificent fresco may be counted, with all propriety, among the illustrations to the "Divine Comedy." The whole is divided by stone piers into the various circles and sections, and the scenes of the poem are presented in due order. And so great was the popularity of Dante's Hell that the painter had no need to be afraid of introducing Minos, Cerberus, the Furies, Charon, the Centaurs, Harpies, and Giants into a picture intended to decorate a Christian church. It is true that, bearing in mind the purpose of the work, he omitted the figures of Dante and Virgil; yet the picture attracts us, even to-day, to this spot with especial charm. From an artistic point of view it was not a happy idea to give such a view of the Dantian Inferno in the form of a large wall-painting. In the first place, no uniform composition could be attempted, and it is rather a confused mass of details which looks out from the fine large wall surface. In the second place, the scenes themselves are so small that monumental effects are excluded. Although the picture as a whole, then, is a failure, yet despite that fact it is of the greatest interest in regard to its matter. In every respect we see the same types which meet us also in the illustrated manuscripts, only there they appear singly and apart, here they are arranged together.

If the relationship of this picture to the miniatures were not of itself so strikingly clear, a full-page miniature of Hell, on the verso of page 1 of the Codex Ital. 74 of the National Library of Paris, dating from the second half of the fourteenth century, would enlighten us (described in detail in Mazzatinti, I., "Manoscritti Italiani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Parigi," I., CXLII., CXLIII.; reproduced by Kraus, fig. 43). The similarity of the two pictures, which, so far as I know, has been nowhere as yet emphasised, is such that there can be no question of coincidence. The precise nature of the connection

PLATE I.



Bernardo Orcagna: Hell.

*Fresco, Florence: S. Maria Novella.*







Miniature of Hell.

*From the Gates of Hell, of the National Library, Paris.*

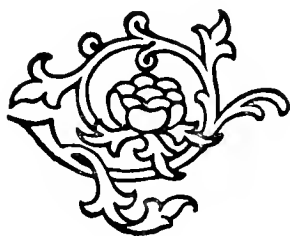


is what we cannot determine ; in all probability it is of the very closest conceivable kind, since many painters on the larger scale were at the same time miniaturists. In any case the opinion that the wall-painting is really only an enlarged miniature is destructive of the objective artistic value of the former. There is no need for me to give a closer comparison of the two pictures, more especially as I am able to give reproductions of both of them here. All that I shall observe is, that there is one motive which is not taken from the "Divine Comedy" common to both pictures—that is, the starving gluttons round the well-piled table. Further, I may mention that the very notes of explanation, numerous though they be, correspond almost literally. The sole essential difference is that Dante and Virgil are represented five times in the miniature, while they are altogether absent from the fresco; that, however, arises from the nature of the case.

If, then, the Hell in S. Maria Novella was accurately painted by Nardo after Dante's model, one might expect that Andrea Orcagna also, in his delineation of the Judgment and of Paradise, must have thought of the poet. He doubtless placed a likeness of the poet among the saints, but in other respects Paradise is conceived quite in the traditional way: Christ and the Madonna on the throne; saints and angels on both sides; underneath, the band of the elect. For a long time Dante's Paradise was not so popular as his Hell, and this splendid picture is very good proof in itself that the old and customary conception of celestial glory lent itself much more naturally to such representation than the thought-laden individual pictures of the poet.

The result of a general consideration of the pictures of the Judgment painted in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is thus somewhat surprising—namely, that the influence of the "Comedy" upon them must not be estimated too highly; at the most, all that we can discover is the borrowing of a few separate motives or artistically lifeless illustrations, which never reach below the surface and do not approach the true spirit of

the poem. If on that account I have had to oppose emphatically the too bold assumption that the "Divine Comedy" exerted a direct influence on plastic art, yet it would be just as false to believe, on the other hand, that Dante's work has been without lasting effect on the Italian conception of the end of the world. The seed which the mighty poet-spirit had scattered was not lost; it began first to sprout when the spring-wind of the Renaissance began to blow; and if in the sixteenth century a great and deep-felt earnestness characterises the Italian representations of the Judgment and of Hell when compared with the northern—take, for instance, the foolish subtleties of a Brueghel and a Bosch—this is primarily to be ascribed to the influence of Dante. In plastic art what a wide space divides Orcagna's great miniature from Signorelli's or Michael Angelo's horror-inspiring dramas! How was it traversed, how was the soil slowly and persistently levelled up, on which the greatest geniuses should raise their master-pieces? The illustrated manuscripts will solve, in part, this problem.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE MANUSCRIPTS.



IT is only comparatively recently that the illustrated manuscripts have been considered worth a detailed examination from the standpoint of iconography and the history of art; the history of miniature painting has unfortunately hitherto been very inadequately treated, and many a problem still awaits solution. Thus it happens that older accounts of the pictorial representations to Dante's work scarcely hint at this side of the question. But it is just the miniatures which, on account of their priority in time and their numerical preponderance, claim undoubtedly the most important place in any treatment of the subject. Recently, it is true, interest in these primitive beginnings of Dante illustration has grown immensely, and whole groups of pictures have been reproduced from manuscripts in magnificent publications, such as those of Cozza-Luzzi and Morel, or else separate characteristic specimens have been reproduced out of the most various manuscripts. Bassermann's work especially, "*Dante's Spuren in Italien*," I shall often have to quote, at least as far as the plates are concerned; for he has worked up his section, "*Dante and Art*," on the plan of my little work (published in 1892), with such kind recognition that his plates may serve as the atlas to my book as well as to his own.

Since the publication of the German edition of the present volume, an exhaustive work on Dante by F. X. Kraus has appeared, which also contains numerous interesting reproductions. I shall be able to refer to these in the following pages, and I

am glad to draw attention to the fact that I have taken some suggestions from this work which were not available for my German edition.

Illustrated book painting very soon took possession of the divine poem. Dante completed his work between the years 1316 and 1320 (details of this scientific dispute do not concern us here), and the oldest illustrated manuscript of it, whose date can be with surety fixed, was prepared before 1333; naturally this does not exclude the possibility that among the undated specimens there are some still earlier. This manuscript is Codex 313 of the Palatina in the National Library at Florence, and I shall speak of it later on.

Unfortunately, as I mentioned above, investigation of the history of miniature painting has not been pushed far enough to enable one to give all these works their proper places in the history of art. For all that, it is certain that by far the majority of the miniatures to Dante, especially of earlier times, are the productions of Florentine or, at least, Tuscan painters. The few upper Italian masters show very characteristic deviations from the ordinary type, and a Burgundian-Flemish artist stands quite by himself. In no single case can we put our hand on the author of these works, so completely does the illustrator yield to the poet, until, in the general upheaval of the Renaissance, the personality of the artist asserted its claim.

The number of illustrated Dante manuscripts is extraordinarily large, and a complete description of them all could not, in the nature of the case, enter into the aim of my iconographical study; it would indeed be almost impossible for one individual to take full cognisance of them all, for the very good reason that they lie in private libraries. Still, I have taken all the most important libraries of Italy, Germany, London, and Paris into consideration, and gathered, I think, sufficient material to present, in the following pages, a general view without essential gaps. The manuscripts of which I make no mention can be added, without much trouble in any case, to the great groups which I here set down.

Although even great artists did not think it beneath their dignity to do work in the miniature line, yet only a very few of the book painters have succeeded in carrying to an end the giant's task before them, and it was granted only to the greatest among them worthily to embody the forms of the poet. The crowd of lesser men who put their hand to the plough often broke down miserably. Parts I. and II., the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, contain so many tangible scenes, so much vivacious action, that even artists of minor importance could find material for characteristic representation. In the *Paradiso*, however, where the action is completely put into the shade by the thought and the sentiment, most of them were powerless. When we look at the matter in this light the words with which Dante prefaced his *Paradiso* gain a distinct meaning:

“All ye, who in small bark have following sail'd,  
Eager to listen, on the adventurous track  
Of my proud keel, that singing cuts her way,  
Backward return with speed, and your own shores  
Revisit; nor put out to open sea,  
Where losing me, perchance ye may remain  
Bewilder'd in deep maze. The way I pass  
Ne'er yet was run: Minerva breathes the gale;  
Apollo guides me; and another Nine  
To my rapt sight the arctic beams reveal.  
Ye other few who have outstretch'd the neck  
Timely for food of angels, on which here  
They live, yet never know satiety;  
Through the deep brine ye fearless may put out  
Your vessel; marking well the furrow broad  
Before you in the wave, that on both sides  
Equal returns.”—*PARADISO*, II., 1-15 (Cary's translation).

How many a miscarried, childish attempt brings these lines back to our memory!

Numberless Dante manuscripts make no pretence to give pictorial representations, but give only more or less rich and gorgeous ornamentation; and in the illustrated manuscripts, too, the ornamental element plays, side by side with the pictorial and figurative, a very important rôle. And since ornamentation is

really an important factor in the whole appearance of a book, and is at the same time of very great use in attempting to fix its date, perhaps it will not appear superfluous to say a few words about it in the first place, although it has nothing to do with the real illustration, and will naturally be the same in a Dante codex as in any other.

In the Trecento coloured scrollwork is the rule—blue, green, brick-red, violet, with gold balls between; frequently the curves are interrupted by heads of men and animals, by birds, dragons, and monsters. This species gradually takes a lighter, easier form, but is kept up to the second half of the Quattrocento. An especially charming example of this is the MS. Ital. 544 of the National Library of Paris, which dates from the fifteenth century.\* Cupids with variegated and particoloured wings, with black pearl chains, on which hangs a bit of coral, round their necks, carry on their rollicking fun in rich-coloured scrollwork, in which gilt balls are strewn about. Strangely coloured birds, with red beaks and legs, snatch at them or are hunted by them. In addition, there are countless fabulous creatures, dragons and snakes, with which the cupids fight; further, many beautifully designed animals of different kinds—dogs, hares, panthers, apes, snails, etc. The beginning of each canto is decorated in this fashion with a remarkably beautiful and rich ornamentation, which, however, is quite void of all connection with the matter of the poetry. Then another style takes the upper hand. On a coloured ground—red, green, blue, and gold—rises elegant interlacing, slender ribbon-work in white. Still farther, at first especially in upper Italy, the real Renaissance ornamentation penetrates into the art; its motives—*putti*, strings of fruit, animals' skulls—are partly taken direct from the antique.

The initials were formed in the same manner. The pen-drawn hands, the forefinger of which points, in each case, to especially important passages, present a peculiar sight. Frequently we find instead of them monsters and enormities, in

\* Earlier, Fonds de réserve, No. 8, 2; Balines, No. 428; Auvray, "Les Manuscrits de Dante des Bibliothèques de France," No. XIV.



which case a bird's beak, a dragon's head, or something similar, draws attention to the passage meant. Very characteristic likewise are the droll creatures, chiefly a marvellous combination from the human and beast world, who often hold on the lower margin of the page a shield, with the first words of the following page written thereon. They are mostly pen-drawings,—often they have been considered important enough for careful painting.

No. 5 of the Codici Rossi of the Fondo Corsiniano in the R. Liceo at Rome, which dates from the fourteenth century (Batines, 347), belongs to this group. The Accademia Etrusca at Cortona possesses a "Divine Comedy" (Batines, II. 215, second half of fourteenth century) in which all sorts of animals—frog, owl, eagle, cock, crane, etc.—hold these shields; and something quite similar is to be found in a Parisian manuscript (Bibl. Nationale, Ital. 530; Earlier, No. 7254; Batines, 432; Auvray, VIII.) of the year 1411, in which animals skilfully drawn with the pen, as dogs, birds, dragons, perform the functions of shield supporters. The first page of the book was often decorated with the arms of the patron—a circumstance which may give us important information as to origin.

The figures of explanation likewise, which in nearly every case accompany the commentary, are not to be dubbed illustrations in the real sense of the word, but they also are very characteristic of the appearance of the manuscripts. Investigations, "*de situ, forma et misura*," of the poet's three realms began early and never ceased; choice spirits have over and over again tried to fathom how Dante's journey through heaven and hell is mathematically conceivable. The great Filippo Brunelleschi, of whom Vasari in his "Life" says, "*Diede ancora molta opera in questo tempo alle cose di Dante, le quali furono da lui bene intese circa i siti e le misure*," was one of these. Also, in the commentaries, such as were added to most works, researches of this kind occupy a great place; and here and there mathematical figures were scattered, accompanied by explanations conducive to a fuller comprehension of the subject by the reader. I will give two examples out of many: the manuscript of the Town

Library at Frankfurt-on-Main (Batines, 529), in which the commentary contains a number of mathematical and astronomical drawings; and No. C. 198 of the Ambrosiana in Milan. Still, the matter did not always remain in the groove of the abstract: personages, scenes from the poem, were also added to the scheme—in fact, in many cases detailed compositions occur in the commentary, which have, however, only the aim of making a difficult passage intelligible, and whose artistic effect is then thoughtlessly spoiled by a mass of annotations. A good instance of this class of commentary pictures is offered by Codex XIII. C. 1. of the National Library of Naples, dating from the beginning of the fifteenth century. A full-page coloured drawing in pen and ink accompanies the twenty-ninth canto of the *Purgatorio*. There, on the left, are the seven golden candlesticks, which precede the chariot of the church; on the right the twenty-four elders with their green wreaths, and other old men with fine, expressive heads; near by the chariot drawn by a griffin and surrounded with the symbols of the evangelists. The whole might very well serve as an illustration of the text, if the annexed explanations—the Ten Commandments and the names of the several virtues—did not unmistakably point to the explanatory nature of the page (Bassermann, Plates 43, 44). Still more striking is this in the second miniature, which represents the giant and the maiden in the chariot of the church, on the pole and wheels of which horned heads bristle. The elegantly drawn representation is literally covered with scrolls of elucidatory sentences, so that there is no longer any question of artistic effects.

After we have excluded these explanatory representations, we must divide the illustrations in the manuscripts of the “*Divine Comedy*” into two great groups, the aim of the first of which is to beautify, and of the second to describe. Corresponding to this difference of intention, the two groups present a difference in the means employed—on the one hand, the real miniature neatly executed in colours and conceived as a complete picture in itself; on the other hand, scenes more freely conceived, but

only slightly coloured, or else mere sketches. Such a division, on the base of execution, is not accidental nor merely external; it is, rather, founded on the inmost nature of the art of illustration. Already the contrast between *painting* and *drawing*, which in our own day Max Klinger has defined so tersely and suggestively, makes itself felt. Vischer has already said in his "Aesthetics": "Drawing is adequate for those subjects in which the idea breaks through the substance to some extent, and in which the predominant spirituality is not compatible with a setting in the plain daylight of reality which is given by colour." We find the same thing expressed clearly by Anton Springer and Eduard v. Hartmann; and in Klinger we find further details from the standpoint of the modern black and white artist: "Where painting must offer to the spectator leisure for pure enjoyment, a new presentation, and transitions, in order to prepare the way from one condition to another conflicting one, drawing develops, in a series of pictures of one tone and in quick rotation, an aspect of life with all the accessible impressions. They may develop themselves epically, or they may be rendered dramatically acute, and gaze out on us with dry irony: shadows as they are, they may touch even on the monstrous without fear of giving offence." If, now, Klinger arrives at the conclusion "that there are pictures of fantasy which cannot be depicted artistically by painting, or at least only under certain conditions, and that these pictures are susceptible of representation through drawing without their artistic merit suffering detriment therefrom," then it is quite evident that by far the majority of the scenes in the "Divine Comedy" are such pictures of fantasy. No chance circumstance is it, then, that the manuscripts which are decorated with real miniatures contain as a rule but few representations, and are only in a few cases illustrated from beginning to end. The miniaturist who undertook to produce a complete coloured picture to each canto very soon gave up the work, either because he recognised that his wealth of expressive material was exhausted or because he simply grew weary.

Many other manuscripts of this first group have as their sole pictorial decoration the coloured illuminated initials of the three parts. For the figures which were painted into these letters a hard and fast scheme had, as it were, developed: the "N" of the *Inferno* almost always contains a likeness of Dante,\* sitting at his writing-table or with his comedy in his hand, also Dante and Virgil in the wood; the "P" of the *Purgatorio* presents Dante and Virgil as they sail in their little bark towards the Mount of Purification, or else souls in the flames; while in the "L" of the *Paradiso* we see either a half-length picture of Christ blessing the people, or Dante and Beatrice, often also the Trinity or the Coronation of the Madonna. Since these manuscripts have very little interest as pictorial representations of the "Comedy," a short list of them will suffice.

Milan, Bibl. Nazionale, A.N. XV. 17, about 1337-47.

Milan, Ambrosiana, C. 198, first half of fourteenth century (Batines, II. 246).

Brera, Bibl. Nazionale, first half of fourteenth century (Batines, 251).

Rome, Bibl. Barberiniana, XLVI. 59, first half of fourteenth century (Batines, 363).

*Ibid.*, XLVI. 58, middle of fourteenth century (Batines, 364). The "P" of the *Purgatorio* here contains, in accordance with the current conception of Purgatory, souls kneeling, around whom flames from the rocks flicker.

Florence, Riccardiana, 1010, about 1350 (Batines, 126).

Modena, Bibl. Estense, VIII. F. 20, second half of fourteenth century (Batines, 228). Only the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*.

Florence, Laurenziana, Plut. 40, No. 13, fourteenth century (Batines, 16).

*Ibid.*, Gadd., Plut. 90 super, No. 126, fourteenth century (Batines, 24).

*Ibid.*, Plut. 40, No. 12, fourteenth century, from which Bassermann reproduces the initial to the *Paradiso* on Plate 12.

Milan, Trivulziana, No. 1079, fourteenth century (Batines, 272).

\* But see what was said above concerning portraits of Dante.

The Inferno presents, besides, on the lower margin, Dante and the three animals.

Venice, Marciana, No. 50, fourteenth century.

Ibid., No. 51, fourteenth century.

Ibid., Class IX., No. 34, fourteenth century.

Breslau, Stadtbibliothek, R. 227, fourteenth century (cf. Batines, 526-28). The Inferno has a decorated border, on which are small medallions.

Rome, Vatican, Ottoboniani 2358, end of fourteenth century (Batines, II. 328).

Bologna, Bibl. Comunitativa, end of fourteenth or beginning of fifteenth century.

Paris, Bibl. Nationale, Ital. 73, dated 1403 (Batines, 431). In the very large initial of each canto Dante with the book in his hand. All three are almost alike, and of very gorgeous decorative effect, in lively colours on a gold ground.

Modena, Bibl. Estense, VIII. F. 22, dated 1409 (Batines, 231) The miniature to the Inferno—Dante with his book—is stuck on, and is of considerably later origin.

Naples, Bibl. Nazionale, XIII. C. 2, dated 1411 (Batines, 405).

Paris, Bibl. Nationale, Ital. 530, dated 1411 (Batines, 432). This manuscript also, which was executed in Padua, gives in the "P" of the Purgatorio a typical Purgatory.

Florence, Laurenziana, Plut. 40, No. 14, first half of fifteenth century (Batines, 85).

The Codex Antaldinus Tertius, in the Sir George Grey Library at Cape Town, of the fifteenth century, shows in the initials Dante with his book, sailing in the bark, with his gaze turned upwards. I have, of course, not seen the manuscript, and refer to the "Year Book of the German Dante Society," Vol. II., p. 243.

Other miniatures go further, and give to each canto a detailed, often full-page, picture. These are mostly "codices de luxe," which were meant to receive, chiefly through the miniatures, a rich and elegant appearance, and now form valuable show-pieces in the exhibit cases of the libraries. Manuscripts of this kind

have frequently the most beautiful and attractive miniatures, just because the artist had only a few illustrations to prepare, and could consequently expend on these the utmost love and care. The initials often contain, besides, the above-named subjects.

Milan, Trivulziana, No. 1080, dated 1337 (Batines, 257). At the beginning of each canto are neat but very old-fashioned figures, painted flesh-colour, both in the initial and on the margin. The *Inferno* shows the two poets several times, as well as the three beasts of prey. The *Purgatorio* represents the poets in the sailing-boat; further, Dante kneeling before Cato, Dante begirt with rushes by Virgil, Dante gazing upwards, and Dante washed by Virgil with dew. In the initial of the *Paradiso* is a very fine representation of the Coronation of Mary; round about are adoring angels, underneath are angels playing on musical instruments, all on a gold ground; sexfoiled medallions surround the whole page with busts of Christ and angels. Beneath, Dante is being crowned with a laurel chaplet by an angel who issues from the heavenly sphere. Bassermann reproduces these three pictures on Plates 9-11.

Siena, Bibl. Comunale, I. VI. 29, first half of fourteenth century (Batines, 221). The codex contains only the *Inferno* and part of the *Purgatorio*; it has therefore only two miniatures, which are very much injured: Dante with the three beasts in the wood, and a ship with swelling sails.

Bologna, Bibl. dell' Università, No. 589, fourteenth century. Unimportant illustrations, partly added in medallions to the ornamentation.

Padua, Bibl. del Seminario, No. 9, fourteenth century (Batines, 280). The first pages of each canto are decorated with miniatures. At the beginning of the first canto of the *Inferno* Dante may be seen with the three beasts in the wood; also among the scrollwork Dante and Virgil twice appear. The *Purgatorio* has a gorgeous initial, with Dante and Virgil in the boat; three medallions in the scrollwork show Virgil and Dante kneeling before Cato, Virgil girding Dante with rushes; and lastly, the two poets again on the river-side. In the initial

to the Paradiso Dante and Beatrice are enveloped in cloud, and rise from a flowery meadow towards the celestial spheres. Three medallions in the scrollwork show Dante and Beatrice in various situations, while above them are the abodes of Paradise. In conception these miniatures are not very distinguished; they make no effort towards depth of characterisation. In execution they are admirable, and attain their end most brilliantly—viz., to decorate and to rejoice the eye. In the scrollwork, besides, are scattered the most charming little grotesques in the style of the French *drôleries*, and each canto has a brilliant initial with many flourishes and grotesque forms.

Florence, Bibl. Nazionale, Palat., 261 Poggiali, fourteenth century (Batines, 167). Each one of the three parts has, besides the initial, a special picture with the above-named typical motives.

Venice, Marciana, No. 53, fourteenth century. In the initial of the Inferno is Dante, with a book in his hand, asleep in his armchair. The whole page is enclosed with ornamentation; beneath are Dante and Virgil. The first page of the Purgatorio and Paradiso were in all probability similarly decorated, but they have been torn out.

Perugia, Bibl. Comunale, B. 25, second half of fourteenth century (Batines, 398). Only the Inferno extant, with two large miniatures, which show Dante in the wood, and Virgil and the three beasts.

Parma, Bibl. Palatina 3285, second half of fourteenth century (Batines, 234). In the initial of the Inferno Dante and Virgil in the wood; around the page medallions with allegorical figures. In the initial of the Purgatorio a soul in a flaming grave (the already often cited misunderstanding); on the lower margin of the page the skiff conducted by the angel twice repeated. In the initial of the Paradiso the Trinity in a mandorla; underneath is Beatrice ascending up to heaven and leading Dante by the hand; beneath are Peter and John at the (gothic) gate of heaven, admitting the blest, who previously are crowned by the angels. These also, then, are

decorative pictures, which scarcely penetrate the real contents of the poem.

Frankfurt-on-Main, Städtische Bibliothek, second half of fourteenth century. The initials of the three parts contain Dante at his desk, the two poets in the sailing-boat, and Dante gazing upwards towards the celestial spheres. Besides, every first page has another complete miniature: Dante in the wood with the beasts; the two poets at the foot of the Mount of Purification; Cato before them as a nude, bearded old man; and lastly, Dante and Beatrice standing among trees, upon which are perched all sorts of carefully painted birds. This last picture shows very well the purely decorative tendency of the whole, for on the left of the border we have scrollwork, and in it we discover a boy, clothed in gay colours, shooting an arrow at one of the birds. In the commentary which is added the painter repeats, almost word for word, the same motives; while in the text as well as in the commentary the individual initials contain, in most cases, fanciful heads or beast forms, although there is now and again an attempt made towards slight connection with the text. Thus, in the last canto of the *Paradiso* there is a half-length picture of the Madonna and Child, most distinctly trecentine in its details, with the headcloth and the small, narrow eyes.

Mantua, Bibl. di Bagno, about 1380 (Batines, 243). In stereotyped fashion the first three pages are decorated.

Paris, Bibl. Nationale, Ital. 77, end of fourteenth century (Batines, 416). Before each *cantica* there is a rather coarse miniature, which, in the *Inferno*, is only contained in the initial.

Florence, Laurenziana, Conv. sopp. 204, end of fourteenth century (Batines, 50). This codex has, in the case of the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* only, one full-page miniature to each, besides the initials. The first represents Dante in the wood, with the three beasts on the right. An original feature is the presence, for the sake of filling up, of all sorts of forest animals—a hare, a pheasant, several stags, and the like; but then the miniatures as a whole show a decided preference for the



beast world. The page to the Purgatory (Kraus, fig. 32) shows the customary group, Dante kneeling before Cato, and Virgil, on the left hand; on the right, in front, Dante is being girded with rushes; in the background a boat, laden with souls and drawn by an angel, is approaching the Mount of Purification, at the gate of which the angel with the sword keeps guard.

Florence, Laurenziana, Plut. 40, No. 3, end of fourteenth century (Batines, 72).—*Inferno*: On the left Dante sleeping, and on the right Dante standing in front of the three beasts, which one above another are grouped on the slope. A very elegant coat of arms decorates the margin (Kraus, fig. 26).—*Purgatorio*: Dante and Virgil in the boat, while souls are to be seen in the water (Bassermann, Plate 17). As an illustration this is very superficial, but the execution is fine.—*Paradiso*: The celestial spheres are represented in the form of half-circles, on which Christ sits in the attitude of benediction, with Mary beside Him. On both sides of Him there are three fine angels. Beneath, on the left, kneels Dante, on the right Beatrice, in an attitude of adoration. These pictures also illustrate nothing; they serve solely a decorative purpose.

Florence, Laurenziana, Tempiano I., dated 1398 (Batines, 7). Here also only the first page of each part is decorated. The initials, which contain allegorical figures, are interesting. In that to the *Inferno*, Justice is represented as a winged woman with sword and balance. A winged woman, too, who leans on the trunk of a blossoming tree, and might well be taken to mean Hope, is prefixed to the *Purgatorio*, to typify the hope of redemption. The figure to the *Paradiso* must be explained to be either Faith or Charity—also a winged woman, on whose breast is a red circle, while in her right hand she holds a praying soul.\* In each case, besides, the upper margin of the page is occupied

\* An analogue to these figures is to be found in Codex Vatic. Lat. 4776. There the initial to the *Inferno* also contains a *Justitia*—*i.e.*, a winged woman with sword and scales; behind her a lion. To the *Purgatorio* belongs a *Caritas*—*i.e.*, a winged woman holding a nest, in which a pelican is opening its breast to its young. In the *Paradiso* there is a *Fides*—*i.e.*, a winged woman, on her breast the countenance of Christ, in both hands a flaming light.

by a larger miniature. In the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* this is divided into four parts, and shows, in the former, Dante lost in the wood, Dante with the lion and the panther, Dante and Virgil before the she-wolf, Dante and Virgil in conversation; and in the latter Dante and Virgil in the boat, Virgil and Dante kneeling before Cato, Dante and Virgil watching the arrival of the soul-laden boat; and lastly, the angel at the gate of the Mount of Purification. The miniature to the *Paradiso* is not divided. It is a large illustration with a gold ground: Christ in a mandorla scattering blessings, and surrounded by red and blue cherubim; on His right hand the Madonna and two saints, beneath sits Dante with his book in his hand, and Beatrice hovers over him; on His left are two reclining saints, while underneath are three blessed women. This last miniature especially is intensely charming; it attracts us like a Florentine picture of the same period, with its fine variegated colours, its gold ground, and its fine slim figures (see Plate 4; Kraus, fig. 27). The halos have been cut and pricked into the gold ground, just as in the case of panel pictures of the same date.

Perugia, Bibl. Comunale, about 1400 (Batines, 397). This contains only two illustrations, of a very general character. In the *Purgatorio* the poets in the boat; on high is Christ, towards whom the souls, rising from their graves, are turning. In the *Paradiso* Dante, and Beatrice, who points to the Trinity.

Venice, Marciana, Class IX., No. 428, fifteenth century. The first cantos of the *Inferno* are missing; the beginning of the other two parts has in each case a wretched miniature.

Florence, Riccardiana, 1006, 1007, 1008, from the years 1412 to 1413 (Batines, II. 318-20). The three volumes contain, besides the initials, only one full-page miniature, which presents Dante, Statius, and Beatrice on the Mount of Purification. Beneath is the door, guarded by the angel; above are the glories of the blessed (Kraus, fig. 77).

Rome, Bibl. Barberiniana, XLVI. 54, dated 1419 (Batines, 367). Of Tuscan origin, this codex contains three miniatures, executed in a very mediocre manner, the most striking feature

of which is that Virgil is represented nude. The Paradiso shows Christ blessing, with Mary on the throne; on both sides are two apostles on benches, and beneath are angels singing. The whole is quite a traditional Paradise; and the miniaturist proves himself extremely conservative in the execution as well as in the conception. The picture might easily be taken for a work of the fourteenth century, were it not dated; and yet the total impression conveyed by it is pleasant and delightful.

Florence, Laurenziana, Plut. 40, No. 16, first half of fifteenth century (Batines, 85). Nothing but the three initials are contemporaneous with the manuscript, while three full-page pictures are not earlier than the end of the Quattrocento. In the Inferno are Dante and the beasts; above are Dante and Virgil; then the two poets in the boat, which is represented with great detail, and well foreshortened; lastly, the blessing Christ, who stands in the clouds.

Florence, Nazionale, B.A. 2, p. 3, No. 10, fifteenth century. It contains, besides the above-mentioned beautiful portrait of Dante in pen and ink, several full-page miniatures, which, however, neither in form nor contents are very interesting.

Milan, Trivulziana, No. 1048, fifteenth century (Batines, 269). This manuscript produces a very elegant impression; initials and decorations are of handsome white ribbon-work on a coloured ground; well forward, in a chaplet held by *putti*, is the coat of arms of the owner. The three miniatures, however, which decorate the beginning of each canto are without importance so far as pictorial illustration is concerned, since the artist has been quite contented with general allusions, without trying to penetrate deeply into the subject matter. In the Inferno, Dante and Virgil stand at the door of Hell; inside, one can see devils and naked souls, without any prominence being given to definite scenes in the poem. The miniature is otherwise only partially carried out, and only in certain places is the sketch complete; and it is very evident from this instance that the real miniaturist sketched quite roughly, and then put

in the fine execution with his brush, while, on the other hand, the true illustrator set the chief importance on the contour, and in fact, as I mentioned above, in many cases let the drawing take care of itself. The illustration to the *Purgatorio*, although well done, shows the same superficiality in point of contents as that to the *Inferno*; a typical Purgatory is represented instead of the Dantian Mount of Purification. Dante and Virgil stand in the middle of the picture, surrounded by seven large pits, where naked souls languish in flames and are further tormented by devils with hooks and tridents. The sketch to Paradise is only lightly done, and suggests the subject only in the most general way. Dante stretches forth his hand in farewell to Virgil at the gate of Paradise; within, one sees the blessing Christ surrounded by angels, under Him souls kneeling in reverence before the Cross.

Turin, Bibl. Nazionale (formerly Bibl. dell' Università), N. VI. 11, fifteenth century (Batines, 316). Three large miniatures of brilliant execution, doubtless from the hand of an upper Italian, and in all probability Paduan, artist. Dante is attacked by the panther, which leaps up at him, and he retreats in a fright. The beast is exquisitely painted. Dante and Virgil approach in a boat the foot of the mountain, where Cato awaits them. The last illustration is one of the most lovely miniatures to the "*Divine Comedy*." In the lower part Dante stands with Beatrice in a rich landscape; God the Father appears aloft in a halo of angels' heads (Bassermann, Plates 13-15). This Turin codex gives a striking example, along with the whole list of manuscripts we have discussed, of the charming work the miniaturist could produce whose attention was confined to one decoration in each cantica. For pictorial illustration of the contents, and for mastery over the material, these productions, in spite of their artistic charm, are of no moment.

The last manuscript I mention is quite the only one of its kind, and I discuss it here, therefore, by itself at the close of this group.

Paris, Bibl. Nationale, Ital. 72 (Batines, 437). Written at the beginning of the Quattrocento, it found a resting-place, in the second half of the same century, in France, and belonged to "Charles de Guyenne, auparavant duc de Berry, frère cadet de Louis XI.": this is indicated by the arms of the "fils de France" in the first initial. Auvray, who describes the codex in his work, "*Les Manuscrits de Dante des Bibliothèques de France*" (No. III.), says concerning its miniatures: "The initials, in some of which the 'fleur-de-lys' plays a prominent part, are in French rather than in Italian taste. On the other hand, the three miniatures are certainly from the pen of an Italian artist."

Since I am in the position—thanks to the tried kindness of M. Léon Dorez, of the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, to present here the three miniatures, I have no need to refute Auvray's assertion in order to convince the student of art history. The pictures bear so unmistakably the impress of the school of Flemish-Burgundian miniaturists that even a hurried look must convince us of their origin. It is, I must say, almost vain to look for connections with Dante. In the picture of Hell, it is true, we see, upon the hill in the rear left, devils who are dragging sinners along with hooks, and pitching them into the lake; in the foreground, however, a devil is tugging about some souls—among them a king and a bishop—with a chain, and close beside them sits a thorough northern long-tailed monster monkey, which is hammering a nail into the breast of a prostrate sinner. On the right looms forth a gallows-like erection, from which hangs a huge cauldron, in which the damned—among them an emperor and a pope—are being slowly cooked; above, on the framework, sits Lucifer—a six-armed, horned devil, with a trident in his hand. The picture to the Purgatorio has still less connection with the "Comedy." Between rocks, and towers with water-spits of a distinct north gothic style, we may see souls languishing in flames; angels comfort them, and bear them aloft to heaven. The angels are entirely of a northern stamp, with their bright and pointed wings and the rumpled

folds of their garments. Roger van der Weyden, Bouts, Memling occur to our mind. On the right lies, on the turf, a nude bounden woman, gnawed at by two beasts, which in all probability are meant to represent dragons, but which look like weasels. The female body likewise, with its haggard form, brings back lively recollections of old Flemish paintings. In the *Paradiso*, lastly, Christ, in the attitude of benediction, sits in a golden mandorla, holding in His left hand the crystalline ball of the world; round Him a halo of red and blue angels; on His right Mary in a blue mantle; on His left John the Baptist; on all sides saints and the blessed ones. The type of the Saviour is that of the Flemish pictures over again, and strikingly suggests the pictures of Christ by Quentin Massys. On the same plate I have reproduced the *Paradise* of the afore-mentioned *Codex Tempiano I.* of the *Laurenziana*, in which the contrast between the Italian conception of this scene and the foregoing is clearly presented. Let us give, then, to these charmingly fine, but, as far as the contents are concerned, utterly misconceived miniatures the honour of being the sole, original, northern illustrations to the "*Divine Comedy*" in the fifteenth century.

The task of illustrating the "*Divine Comedy*" throughout with true highly finished miniatures was also often taken in hand; but almost all attempts failed, by reason of the great difficulties and the vast extent of such a work, so that we have here to deal chiefly with mere beginnings and fragments. The oldest illustrated manuscripts certainly were very frequently illustrated in this fashion, and it seems as if later illustrators, made wise by the ill success of these attempts, took refuge in simple or at least only lightly coloured drawings. The illustrations of this kind are conceived as pictures, complete in themselves; they have therefore a frame, usually a bright red or gold edge and, provided the scene is not a landscape or a piece of architecture, a coloured background, which, in the miniatures of the *Trecento* and the early *Quattrocento*—which we have next to treat of—is black, gold, or deep blue.

Some manuscripts must first be mentioned here which



Miniature to the Inferno.

*From the Codex Ambrosianus, in the National Library of Milan.*



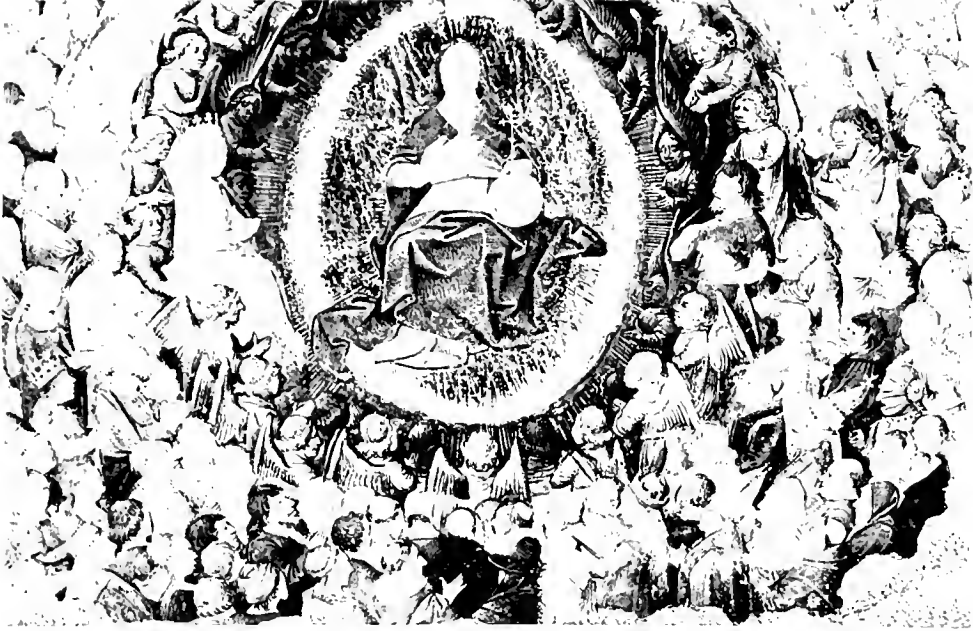
Miniature to the Purgatorio.

*From the Codex Ambrosianus, in the National Library of Milan.*





PLATE IV.



Miniature to the Paradise.

*From the Codex Ital. 2. of the National Library of Paris.*



Miniature to the Paradise.

*From the Codex Temporensis I. of the Laurentiana Library at Florence.*



possess pictorial illustrations to each canto, but rather of a decorative than of a really illustrative nature. In the case of these the decorative character of the miniatures is proved by the fact that the pictures are contained merely in the initials, and hence, from the nature of the case, exclude a free composition.

Florence, Riccardiana, No. 1005, first half of fourteenth century. *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*.

Milan, Nazionale, A. G. XII. 2, first half of fourteenth century. The corresponding *Paradiso*.

F. Carta says, concerning the decoration of this copy of the "*Comedy*," that it is "*opera non buona, ma abbastanza curiosa*"; and as a matter of fact it is very amusing to turn over the pages of this codex, which excels many a more richly illustrated copy in fresh and original comprehension of the poet. There are hundreds of small initials scattered here and there in the book, which, although not more than two to three centimetres square, contain little figures—often only heads or half-sized figures, in some cases whole groups. The tiny scale and the limitation of the initials themselves place these illustrations strictly in the domain of the decorative; and if Lippmann ventures to say, with regard to the Venetian woodcuts to Dante, that they are more like signs to aid in finding the passages than real illustrations, the same is certainly true in increased measure of these little figures. In the *Inferno* there are frequently suggestions of the crimes which are atoned for in a certain circle of hell: thus, at the beginning of Canto 7 there is a lank miser, whose hand spasmodically grasps his money-bags; Canto 12, a knight, who runs a man through the body (violence towards others); Canto 13, a man, who plunges a dagger into his own breast (suicides); Canto 14, a soldier with raised hand before the head of Christ (blasphemers); Canto 18, a youth, who approaches a maiden with presents (seducers); Canto 19, a cardinal, in front of whom stands a Churchman, who points to a purse (Simonists); Canto 23, a reading monk and a devil (flatterers); Canto 24, a man asleep, from

whom a ragged beggar pilfers a garment (thieves); Canto 29, a man, who hammers gold pieces on an anvil (swindlers, especially forgers). We find the same in the *Purgatorio*: e.g., in Canto 10, a horned giant with shield and club (arrogance); Canto 15, a death-blow (anger); Cantos 19 and 20 (covetousness); Canto 23, a man eating at a well-plenished table (glutton); and the like. Wherever the illustrator attempts real illustrations to the text, the attempt falls flat and insipid, as in the *Inferno*, 33, Count Ugolino and Archbishop Roger. In the *Paradiso* half-length portraits of Dante are frequent; and, in their turn, the persons who are from time to time introduced as speakers are depicted. Bassermann has reproduced of these (Plates 26-32) the illustrations to *Inferno* 18, 29, 27, 32, and to *Purgatorio* 7, 20, 33; while in the "History of Italian Literature" which is to appear this year (Leipzig, Bibliographical Institute), *Inferno* 27 is portrayed.

Nearest the above mentioned, although not upon the same level, stands a manuscript at

Stuttgart, Kgl. öffentliche Bibliothek, fourteenth century (Batines, 523). The initials at the commencement of the three parts contain the accustomed scenes, but in addition we find in the initials of all the cantos heads, busts, and half-figures. Frequently they represent only Dante, Virgil, the blessing Christ, grinning devils, or else pictures of the saints; in other cases, scenes from the poem itself appear. Thus in the *Inferno*, Canto 8, Dante's head, in front of the embattled walls of the city of Dis; Canto 19, heads in flames—a miscomprehension of the punishment of the Simonists; Canto 25, Vanni Fucci blaspheming "with thumbs thrust out"; Canto 26, the heads of the evil counsellors in flames; Canto 28, Mahomet with his body ripped open; Canto 29, a sinner covered with boils; Canto 31, Nimrod blowing a horn; Canto 33, Ugolino and Roger. In the *Purgatorio*, Canto 9, the rising sun; Canto 10, a burden-bearer (pride); Canto 19, Dante asleep; Canto 28, Dante crowned by Virgil. In the *Paradiso* nearly always busts of Dante or Beatrice, the latter most often

gazing at a constellation; also angels and saints—among them, in the twenty-fourth canto, Peter with the key—Christ or the Madonna. It is very easy for one to picture in one's mind a workshop where such manuscripts were illuminated systematically; and the possessor certainly would be very pleased when he found out a given place without any trouble by the aid of the initial pictures.

Rome, R. Liceo, Fondo Corsiniano, Codici Rossi, No. 5, fourteenth century (Batines, 347), belongs also to the same class. Each part has a miniature, conceived as a complete picture; and all the initials contain heads, but they express no real connection with the poem.

Paris, Bibl. Nationale, Ital. 78, end of fourteenth century (Batines, 429), also makes an attempt at illustration, in the initials, on a rather greater scale; yet only *Inferno* 1–8, 12, 13, receive a coloured and finished form; *Inferno* 9, 10, 11, 14–17, are sketched, and the remainder is wanting entirely. The large initials contain scenes of the poem carried out in dainty little figures; but much greater value is laid on the gorgeous tendril-like ornamentation, with its cupids, beasts, and monsters.

In a very similar manner another manuscript is executed, but much more fully; viz.:

Florence, Nazionale, B.A., p. 1, N. 5 (formerly Magl. I. 29), dating from the year 1400 or 1405 (Batines, 102). The ornamental part is quite brilliant, both the initials and the rich tendril work; the figures, too, are carried out with the greatest care, but they must be relegated to an inferior place, since they are too evidently subsidiary to the ornamentation and too decorative for one to say that they have independent signification. The interesting initial to the *Inferno*, which represents a reading of Dante by Francesco da Buti,\* will be reproduced as a woodcut in the "History of Italian Literature," along with an initial

\* A like representation is to be seen in No. 55 of the Marciana at Venice (end of the fourteenth century). The commentator has an initial to every part, and the one to the *Inferno* specially shows an expounder of Dante, to whose words a crowd is listening.

containing the representation of Trajan and the widow on the one side, and the proud men bearing their burden on the other (Purgatorio 10). Purgatorio 14 has been reproduced by Kraus, fig. 30; and of the other initials—the Inferno has, in all, seventeen, the Purgatorio fifteen, the Paradiso forty-eight—Bassermann has reproduced a few (Plate 33, Inferno 2; Plate 34, another initial to Inferno 2 and Paradiso 4). The painter evidently has been charmed with his subject, possessing a lively imagination; and he often surprises us by representations of the scenes and similes of the poet, which are rather peculiar, although lying outside his proper domain. The arrangement of the illustrations to the Paradiso—which, divided into two scenes, show, above, the transactions in heaven, and, below, the events, there discussed, on earth—is very clever, and presents combinations similar to those which the Venetian wood-cut editions of the fifteenth century repeat later on. Towards the end it is evident certainly that the artist is getting fatigued; he loses himself altogether in generalities, and represents again and again Christ and the Madonna in the halo.

Genoa, Bibl. Durazzo, D., No. 8. I was unfortunately unable to see this manuscript. It dates from 1408 (Batines, 312), and is said to possess beautiful miniatures in the initial letters of the cantos.

If we now turn to those miniaturists who undertook to illustrate the “Divine Comedy” throughout by complete miniatures, we are met by the fact, already mentioned, that many of them got no further than the beginnings. Florence, Riccardiana, No. 1057, dating from the fifteenth century (Batines, 138), has only a few figures on the first page, all the decoration of which is done by the pen. A manuscript in the Milich’sche Bibliothek at Görlitz, end of the fourteenth century, has one single miniature to Inferno 4; and R. 226 of the Stadtbibliothek of Breslau has only two scenes to the first canto of the Inferno. In some cases several scenes at least of the Inferno are illustrated; but in the other parts the space left empty for the miniatures proves that the work

was really meant to be continued. Thus Rome, Vatican, Ottoboniani, No. 2863, fifteenth century (Batines, 334), has pictures only to *Inferno* 24-26; Padua, Bibl. del Seminario, No. 2, fourteenth century (Batines, 279), has, to *Inferno* 1-12, unimportant pictures on the lower margin; Milan, Trivulziana, No. 2263, of the year 1405 (Batines, 261), has mediocre miniatures in the first ten cantos. The gradual feeling of weariness which crept over the painter is very plainly seen in Codex Plut. 40, No. 15, of the Laurenziana in Florence, about 1431 (Batines, 85), in which, of the ten illustrations (which are of a fairly general character), the first are finished miniatures, others are only partly executed in colours, while the last of the group are only sketched with the pen.

The oldest among the more important manuscripts of this group, and, at the same time, the oldest dated Dante manuscript bearing pictorial decoration at all, is the codex

Florence, Nazionale, Palatina, 313 (Batines, 163), written before 1333, and provided with illustrations soon after that date. At least *Inferno* 2-13 and *Purgatorio* 2 are fairly contemporaneous with the text, while the three illustrations to the *Paradiso* are probably somewhat later. In *Inferno* 1 and *Purgatorio* 1 the corresponding miniatures of another codex have been affixed. The scenes of the Hell are here represented very cleverly and vividly in thirty-two miniatures, the gestures and movements being often full of character (*Inferno* 10 has been reproduced by Kraus, fig. 33). For example, the powerful conception, which in later times frequently recurs, of Dante, as he passes by one of the flaming graves, holding his nose to avoid the evil stench, is already to be found here. The minotaur also, who bites his arm in rage, the two devils, who wrestle with each other, Roger and Ugolino, are lively scenes; and on the whole these illustrations are the forerunners direct of the later drawings. For as regards the personages of the *Inferno* there was very soon developed a set of well-defined types which everybody knew and helped to develop further; while in the *Purgatorio*, where there are fewer, and in the

rarely illustrated *Paradiso*, individual conception comes best to light. The miniaturist here, too, is not quite free from small errors: many of the antique personages, for example, as Minos, Plutos, Cerberus, are conceived as devils; and while he depicts the harpies and the giants correctly, he has only half comprehended the idea of a centaur. In *Inferno* 25 he draws the centaur Cacus as a naked rider upon a fire-breathing, snake-bridled horse.

Illustrated likewise only in the *Inferno*, and very closely akin to the former manuscript, is No. 1102 (formerly S. 2, 10) of the Biblioteca Angelica at Rome, middle of fourteenth century (Batines, 359). Beautifully executed miniatures, frequently on a gold ground, are given with every canto of the *Inferno*, enclosed in a red frame. Bassermann reproduces on Plate 25 the pictures to the seventh and twenty-first cantos of the *Inferno*. A certain importance seems to be set on expressive movements: the poets flee in terror from the raging minotaur; Virgil bears Dante in his powerful arms to save him from the band of devils; Dante lays his finger on his nose in astonishment at the sight of men being transformed into dragons; Virgil tugs Dante by the cloak to prevent his hearing further the wrangling of two of the damned; Charon, represented indeed as a devil, beats with his oar a soul sitting in the boat—a motive which the majority of illustrators have, strange to say, passed over, although Dante describes it most completely and effectively. To be sure, he does not swing the oar over his head with that powerful movement by which Michael Angelo's Charon preserves his classical form; rather, he holds it stiffly in his hand. The conception of the harpies, however, who are here represented as having the white-bearded heads of men on the bodies of birds, is especially touching.

London, Brit. Museum, Egerton 943, about the middle of fourteenth century (Batines, 537). This manuscript is illustrated throughout, and contains to each canto one or more pictures by the same hand; so that, in point of quantity, this has more



miniatures than all the others. It is true that the unknown artist's desire to illustrate was far in advance of his capacity, and the execution is not very great; but for all that, these illustrations, by reason of their naïve interpretation of many scenes in the costume and custom of the time, are exceedingly interesting, and the catalogue of the manuscripts of the British Museum is quite right in describing them as "valuable for costume." We see much here in embryo which gradually attained firm form in art; in other respects, the miniaturist is hesitating, limited in scope, and full of misconceptions. The tustle of the devils, the blaspheming Vanni Fucci, Agnello Brunelleschi and the six-legged snake, Ugolino and Roger,—all these favourite scenes of the painter are faithfully and intelligently depicted. Many also of the old-world personages, assigned by Dante to Hell, are correctly represented, but others are falsely conceived as traditional grinning demons. The centaurs, for instance, are again the stumbling-block of the artist: he presents them as nude giants with bow and arrows; and Cacus is, in his description, such a nude giant surrounded with snakes, although, strictly following the poet, he has set a fire-spitting dragon on the nape of the giant's neck. The beginning of the *Purgatorio* is used straightway to give a realistic representation of one of the huge sailing ships of that date, in the stern of which Dante is seated busily writing, as if he were committing to paper his late journey through Hell. Characteristic of the artist is the "Justice of Trajan," a scene which he does not present as a marble-relief, as Dante does, but as a beautiful assemblage of knights clad in the manifold brilliant costumes of the time. In the course of the *Purgatorio* he becomes very monotonous, often merely repeating the two poets in conversation among rocks; and in the end he loses himself in a broad treatment of the allegorical events of the last canto. All the transformations of the chariot of the church, for instance, are thought worth one special picture, while the charmingly artistic scenes with Mathilda and Beatrice are passed over unheeded. The *Paradiso*, too, is monotonous and insipid.

In every canto we see Dante and Beatrice, and above them on the right the celestial spheres and the planet belonging to each particular sphere, or else the heads and busts of those individuals who are introduced from time to time. Everything considered, this codex, too, like the former, is an instructive instance of how the older artists painfully struggled with the material, and only gained the mastery over it by degrees.

A manuscript in the library of the Duke of Aumale at Chantilly (formerly in the possession of the Marchese Archinto at Milan), which dates from the fourteenth century, belongs also to this group. Batines, who describes it (No. 256), says that it has, at the foot of each page, beautiful miniatures, which, if they are not the work of Giotto, at any rate belong to his school. Unfortunately I have not seen this valuable manuscript.

Naples, Bibl. Oratoriana, Codice Filippino, middle of fourteenth century. This famous manuscript, which through mischance I have not seen, contains very numerous little miniatures, of a rather rough execution, although, in part, of quite original conception (*Inferno* 92 and *Purgatorio* 53). Miscomprehensions and *gaucheries* are, too, not unfrequent. Bassermann gives on Plates 21–24 the illustrations to *Inferno* 18, 12, 19, and 34, reproduced in collotype. As early as 1865 *Inferno* 2 was reproduced in outline by lithography, in the great publication, “*Il Codice Cassinese della Divina Commedia.*”

The miniatures in No. 54 of the Marciana at Venice are of more trivial execution still; in fact, these represent perhaps the lowest and most primitive stage ever reached by an attempted illustration of Dante, although they are not earlier than the second half of the fourteenth century. *Inferno* 1–19 (20 only sketched), 29–34, *Purgatorio* 1–10 are done in colours.\* The coarse and angular figures, with their dull colours, do not stand out at all prominently on the black ground; the colouring is awkwardly carried out in broad daubs. At first sight the

\* There is in *Paradiso* 8 a figure, explained in a note to be Charles Martel, so hideously drawn that I ascribe it to an unintelligent reader, who is no doubt responsible for the adjoining words of apology: “*Feeli che potui — Lege adimplevj.*”

miniatures would be considered to be much older than they really are. There is no trace of lively movement, or, indeed, of expression at all; all the limbs are badly drawn, and the folds of the garments scarcely suggested. The painter's lack of culture and intellectual weakness are on a par with his technical incapacity; his acquaintance with the "Comedy" seems to have been of the most superficial kind: thus he presents all the creations of the classical world which have a place in the poem simply as stupid devils with claws, horns, and red eyes, etc.—as Minos, Cerberus, Pluto, Charon—in fact, even the minotaur, the giants, and the centaurs. He gave up the task at Purgatorio 10: what, indeed, would he have made of the Paradiso? In this case we may say that the illustrator and the rubricator are one and the same person, for if in any canto there is no miniature there is likewise no red superscription. It may have been of frequent occurrence for such an inferior man to paint the initials and even to provide them with figures; it was certainly exceptional for him to attempt the daring undertaking of giving a complete series of illustrations to the work—in fact, we have seen that skilled miniaturists had done far better work at a much earlier date.

A manuscript from the beginning of the fifteenth century, which was formerly in Constantinople, and now belongs to the Universitätsbibliothek at Buda-Pesth (No. 33), gives us a peculiar insight into the workshop of such a book painter. Up to Purgatorio 12 the miniatures are finished; then there are five scenes, till Purgatorio 15, sketched with the pen. From this point there is nothing but the empty space left for the pictures. Some one who was acquainted with the poem—perhaps the copyist, perhaps the patron—from time to time prescribed to the master painter in a light hand what he had to paint; and if we consider more closely these instructions, which, in part, are still recognisable, alongside the finished pictures, the fact comes out that the illustrator need not be supposed to have had much idea of the real sense of the poem. In Purgatorio 2 are the words, "due agoli i aere e dante i genocho e vgilio

fauella ai āgoli." The painter accurately produces "two angels in the air, Dante on his knees, and Virgil speaking to the angels." Purgatorio 13: "D & V. che fauela (favella) chō una aīa (anima) nuda & femina"; the sketched scene shows the two poets, and before them a nude female figure. The painter probably did not even know that this was the Sienese woman Sapia! Purgatorio 17: "V. c. D. fauela & vno agnollo ī aera" (Virgil speaks with Dante, and an angel in the air). From the twenty-first to the twenty-fourth canto of the Purgatorio Statius is constantly reproduced as "vn dvxe" (duce)—*i.e.*, as a leader: for example, Canto 22: "vn dvxe e V. e dāte che fauela a vna aīa (anima) che suso un albero" (a leader, with Virgil and Dante, who is speaking to a soul under a tree). The painter did not need to know that the soul under the tree was Forese Donati. Purgatorio 27: "vno agnolo e ī aere e fauela cō le aīe" (an angel is in the air, and speaks with the souls). Afterwards, Statius is called also "lo dotore"; *e.g.*, Purgatorio 29: "lo dotore e dāte fauella, & una raina (regina) che a molte dōcelle in soa chonpagna" (the clerk and Dante speaking, and a queen who has many maidens in her retinue). A queen accompanied by her maidens,—that was more tangible than Beatrice! Purgatorio 32: "lo dvce & D. va diedo (dietro) la doña che va via diedo lo grifone" (the leader and Dante go behind the lady, who goes off behind the griffin). Also in the same: "vn grifon che mena via vn caro (carro) e una aguglia (aquila)" (a griffin, which drags away a chariot, and an eagle). That was all that the illustrator required to know to enable him to describe this difficult allegory! He, and many others like him, had to paint in accordance with these catchwords; and his pictures are not worse than those of other men,—they are neatly done on the customary deep blue background with red edges. Occasionally we are surprised by the highly vivid and original characterisation. In Inferno 2 Beatrice, who appears to Virgil with a crown, is represented as a queen. Immediately our thoughts revert to the prescriber,

who, in *Purgatorio* 29 also, demands a queen ("vna raina"). Charon is, in *Inferno* 3, a swarthy devil, who lifts up his oar to beat the poor souls—a very rare motive in the miniaturists (cf. the remarks on Codex Bibl. Angelica, No. 1102). Another very uncommon feature, too, is that the minotaur (*Inferno* 12) is represented as a hairy man of reddish-brown hue with an ox-head, while elsewhere we find him continually as an ox centaur (cf. the chapter on the "Conception of the Cinquecento"). On the other hand, the centaurs are wrongly represented in the same canto; they are here three nude crowned men (the red painting-over of many figures in the *Inferno* is a barbarism of a later date), who span their bows against Dante and Virgil. In any case the prescriber is at fault here, for the words "tre omini nudi" are quite distinctly visible on the upper margin. In *Inferno* 33 Dante and Virgil are to be seen standing before a building with two towers; in front the building is open, and three men stand therein, clothed in long garments, and making piteous gestures; before them kneels a fourth man. These are Ugolino and his sons in the Tower of Starvation, and this is one of the earliest and most primitive representations of this theme, so much liked in later times.—These few instances will suffice to show how interesting the decoration of the Buda-Pesth codex is from an iconographical point of view. The painter shows thorough technical skill; but he would be much more readily taken for a Trecentist, so prepossessed is he in favour of the traditional designs. Especially where, as in *Purgatorio* 10, he paints a madonna, he suggests Cimabue decidedly more than the masters of the fifteenth century.

Two manuscripts in Paris contain nothing but the *Inferno*. The first—

Paris, Bibl. Nationale, Ital. 74, end of fourteenth century (Batines, 419), has been already mentioned above, on account of the interesting full-page miniature at the beginning, which corresponds so surprisingly with the fresco of Orcagna in S. Maria Novella in Florence. Each canto has, further, a

miniature, but the pictures are rather destined for decoration than for a conscientious interpretation of the contents. We must not be astonished that the old-world heroes (Canto 4), even Virgil himself, wear the costume of the time; otherwise these pictures are a mixture of what was comprehended fully, of what was half comprehended, and of what was not comprehended at all. They stand very high as regards execution, and the very first page shows what this miniaturist could do if he had merely to decorate. A beautifully ornamented border runs round the whole, in which are to be found the allegorical forms of geometry, arithmetic, logic, music, rhetoric, astrology, and grammar, along with one prominent representative of each science. Armorial bearings and charming, realistically painted birds also enliven the ornamentation. (Kraus, figs. 25, 44.) It is technically not uninteresting that the glittering ice, in which the giants are plunged up to the hips, is reproduced by means of a coat of silver, in the same way as the Flemish miniaturists sought frequently to represent the brilliancy of panes of glass.

Paris, Bibl. Nationale, Ital. 2017, assignable to the year 1440 or thereabouts (Batines, 443), has been published as a whole, and with a complete text, by Morel, for which reason I will only mention the interesting manuscript, without going into details. As early as 1838 Zacheroni, in his critical edition of this manuscript, reproduced, along with the commentary of Guiniforto delli Bargigi, several of the miniatures in fairly good outline drawings, namely, one apiece to the first, third, eighth, ninth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, and twenty-seventh cantos. The unscrupulous editor stole from the codex entrusted to him for the work a number of miniatures, thirteen of which are still to be found in the Biblioteca Comunale at Imola (No. 32). Kraus gives, at figs. 45-7, three of the miniatures from *Inferno* 22 and 25. The Parisian manuscript contains fifty-eight pictures; about forty-four have been lost, by reason of mutilations which the precious manuscript suffered at the hands of children before

its re-discovery, and there must thus have been close on one hundred and fifteen illustrations originally to the *Inferno* alone. Unfortunately, too, many of the extant miniatures have been irreparably injured through want of understanding, particularly by the frequent erasure of "nudities" or devils; but upon the whole this manuscript, along with the next, represents perhaps the highest point ever arrived at by real miniaturists in their attempts to illustrate the "*Comedy*." Closely following the chief incidents of the poem in all its many scenes, the artist has, withal, conceived the whole sharply and often most suggestively, and has described it, in many cases, with a very happy realism. The manifold transformations of men and snakes, for example, in the twenty-fifth canto are excellently painted; the type of the oar-brandishing Charon marks a decided onward development, and the demon scenes are conceived vividly and not without humour. A picture to Canto 7, where the contrary courses of the misers and spendthrifts are marked by the fact that we see behind them the prints of their trail in the sand, is quite original! Morel gives also the results of very careful researches concerning the probable painter of these miniatures, whom he seeks to trace in the Lombard school, but he really arrives at no very fixed conclusion, and his attempts define clearly the position which the knowledge of the history of miniature painting had reached in his day: on the one hand, numerous and in part highly valuable works; on the other, a series of meaningless names, painfully extracted from archives which cannot, unfortunately, in most cases be brought into definite connection with the works.

The last manuscript of this group is—

Rome, Vaticana, Urbinati, No. 365 (Batines, 339). This work stands alone of its kind, and if the task of illustrating the "*Divine Comedy*" in complete pictures could be performed at all, it has found a solution in this book. As the signature informs us, the codex is from the library of the Dukes of Urbino. The dedication on the first page, "DI · FIDERICVS · VRBINI · DVX · ILLVSTRISSIMVS · BELLI · FVLGV · ET · PACIS · ET ·

P · PIVS PATER," shows that the art-loving Duke Federigo of Montefeltro was the patron. Since now we find in the ornamentation the English Order of the Garter, with the motto, "Hony soit qui mal y pense," which was bestowed on the Duke in 1476 by Edward IV., and since Federigo died in 1482, the origin of the manuscript must be assigned to the time between these extreme dates. Infinite pains have been taken with it; along with brilliant initials and border ornamentation in white ribbon-work on a coloured ground, the codex is decorated with one hundred and ten large miniatures of the finest and most careful workmanship, of which forty-one belong to the Inferno, thirty-six to the Purgatorio, and thirty-three to the Paradiso. In D'Agincourt's work, "*Storia dell' Arte*," Atlante, Plate 77 (Prato, 1829), four of them from Inferno 1, 3, and 5 are reproduced, unfortunately in not very instructive outlines; in Beissel, "*Vaticanische Miniaturen*," Purgatorio 1 is copied, and Bassermann gives on Plates 35, 42, 46, 47, and 48 the pictures to Inferno 1, 5, 18, 25, 34, and Purgatorio 1 and 2 in collotype. To my great joy, I am in a position to present, besides a copy of Inferno 6, a beautiful coloured plate of Inferno 12. Since I had the pleasure of rendering a modest assistance in connection with the preparation of the illustrations for the "*History of Italian Literature*," the Bibliographical Institute has accorded me the more than usually kind permission to print these plates from their work before its appearance in print, for which courtesy I remain gratefully indebted to them. Recently F. X. Kraus has reproduced the miniatures to Inferno 5 and Purgatorio 10 (figs. 35-7). The work was certainly not executed all at a stretch, nor was it brought to an end by the original artist. I take it that, in 1482, it was still in process of being finished, and was allowed to stand, at the duke's death, just as it was—*i.e.*, with the finished pictures to the Inferno and the Purgatorio (with the exception of Cantos 26 and 27 and the last six illustrations), and those to the tenth canto of the Paradiso. This first series of miniatures



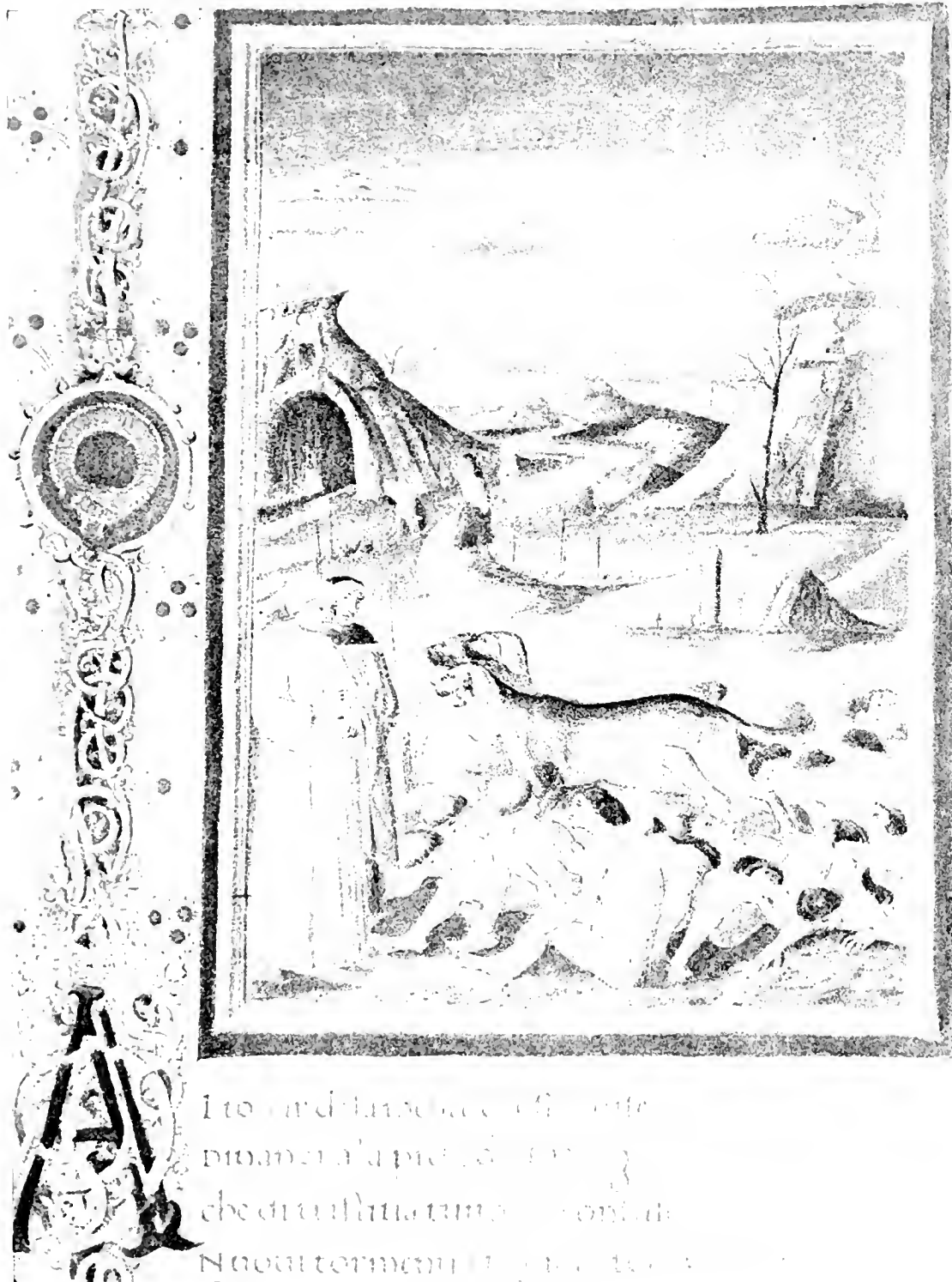
shows familiar characteristics—lank, angular bodies, prominent features, sharply drawn straight folds of the garments, everything of a very marked plastic nature. In the landscape are rocks of a peculiar riven formation, often crossed with gold streaks; in the foreground carefully executed colour stones; in the sky many a gay cloud lighted up with gold. In addition there is shown a good knowledge of anatomy and perspective in connection with the foreshortening of the human body, and an evident familiarity with the personages of antique mythology. All these features would make it appear as if the artist had been strongly influenced by Mantegna or Pier della Francesca. The miniatures show the closest relationship in style with works of the Ferrarese school, especially with those of Francesco Cossa. At Duke Federigo's court, indeed, artists from all quarters found employment; but since Mantegna, as well as Pier della Francesca, were well known and cherished there, it does not seem to me impossible that we have before us the work of an indigenous Umbrian painter, who was deeply influenced by the great masters.\* Although the codex really owes its fame to the second series of miniatures, yet the less esteemed, because less striking, illustrations of the earlier master are undoubtedly the more important. He stands alone in the list of the older Dante illustrators, by reason of his attempt to give character to the scenes by the introduction of landscape and sky. Sometimes he gives a broad desert landscape with blue distance, sometimes rugged masses of rock with snow-capped mountains in the background; at one time a rocky road vanishing in perspective, then again a gorge whose rocky walls seem to rise without limit above the upper edge of the picture. Clouds, water, ice are treated with fond love and with great skill; there is none of the indifferent, meaningless scenery so often found elsewhere.

\* D'Agincourt, "*Storia dell' Arte*," Vol. VI., pp. 264 *et seq.*, discusses the miniatures, and considers those to the Purgatorio as belonging to the school of Perugino. Ad. Venturi has recently ascribed them to Guglielmo Giraldi, called "*Il Magro*" (1443-77), who was working about 1470 at Ferrara, where choir books from his hand are still preserved in the cathedral.

The sky appears of all shades—in the most glowing evening red and in the yellow twilight, in the brightest light of day and the deepest blackness of night, in the sunny azure as well as beclouded with threatening nimbi. In the *Purgatorio* the illustrations are considerably weaker, so that one may assume decreasing interest in the painter or else that he was assisted by his scholars, if we are not to assign them to another artist altogether. The old-world beings are represented, as remarked above, with an evident knowledge of mythology, while in other examples, even of later date, the echoes of mediæval chimeras are still powerfully active. The ferrymen of the nether-world, Charon and Phlegias, are no devils, but bearded old men; the centaurs are depicted correctly and with skill; Cerberus is no longer a fantastic demon, but a very finely painted three-headed dog, who stands between the excellently foreshortened bodies of the damned. The artist has even allowed himself to be led into a whimsicality through his knowledge of the antique. Geryon (*Inferno* 17), whom Dante describes as having the head of a man and the body of a snake with hirsute paws, he represents, seduced by the similarity, as a Triton or a sea centaur: this leads to the consequence that the poets are borne across a stream, while in the poem the monster hovers with them through the air!—Earnestness, force, and energy breathe out of all these creations.

Not until more than a century later was the decoration of the splendid manuscript to be completed. In an inventory prepared under Duke Guidobaldo I. (1482–1507), it is still reckoned among the unfinished, and therefore unbound, volumes of the library of Urbino (Cod. Vat. Lat. Urb., 1761, p. 117). Between the two sets of pictures here peacefully united into one manuscript lies the glorious midday of the Renaissance; the former set belongs to the rising, the latter to the setting branch of Italian art. The later illustrations must consequently be considered in connection with the art of another age (cf. the section, “Dante and the Art of the Epigoni”).

When we look back on the series of Dante manuscripts



Miniature to Inferno VI.

*From the Vatican Library of the Vatican Museums.*



with miniatures in the narrower sense, it is clearly seen that nothing complete and final in the way of the illustrating of the "Divine Comedy" was done or could be done by this method. An artist who wished really to master his material would not try his hand, for very good reasons, at the carefully composed and laboriously executed real miniature, and if he did, in hardly any case did he bring the work to a conclusion, as the examples we have discussed strikingly show. Nay, more, this exceedingly fantastic and allegorical material demands a certain lightness—one might even say, buoyancy—of representation which a neat miniature forbids, and which, on the grounds specified above, is accessible to the province of drawing alone. The real illustrations, then, to the "Divine Comedy" are mostly scenes lightly painted in water colour or else mere pen drawings.

Another point of view now comes into consideration. Miniature, far from being a progressive art, was in Italy of a continually conservative nature—nay, more, it was retrogressive; and when towards the end of the fifteenth century it had reached its high-water mark, as in the case of the first miniaturist of the Vatican Codex 365, its last hour had already struck—the reproductive arts, copper-plate and wood-cut, entered the lists victoriously against book painting. The prints and wood-cuts to the "Divine Comedy," however, are founded on the manuscripts, with freer illustrations; in fact, they are evolved immediately from these, and stand to them in manifold interconnections. It is finally recognised that a Dante illustration must be chiefly descriptive, and the strife between painting and drawing is settled in favour of the latter.

It is very evident that the miniatures represent a fading tendency, while the freer illustrations introduce a rising one. I do not mean by that, that all manuscripts of this second great group were on a high level, although they doubtless denote an essentially higher stage of development. There must naturally be a very clear line drawn between artists and artisans in any case, but, on the other hand, the boundary marks between

miniatures and drawings are not very sharply defined. In this department I have reckoned all those illustrators who have left the principle of a closed and framed picture in body-colour, and who treat their illustrations as freely sketched scenes, whether they are more or less coloured or are merely in pen and ink. An artist who approached the work from this side was quite naturally attracted to the episode picture, to the discursive method, which all naïve periods of art especially are very fond of using, and which is still current among us in the domain of the "sketch." The excellent account of the essence of discursive painting, as given by Lamprecht,\* may be applied with propriety to most of the codices of this group: "The individual pictures have no unity of composition, merely subsidiary to one point of view; they are not pictures of situations, but illustrations which, working by suggestion and by scenes which merge into one another, paraphrase the progress of the action represented. These pictures do not aim at charming, they only relate. Out of the one situation the next grows; from this the third and sometimes even a fourth,—all of them within the frame of the same picture." It is plainly the case that the artist's task of following the poet on his onward way was made easier by the possibility of the union of several scenes in one; and thus in the extensive application of the episode picture there was an essential incitement towards a deeper artistic penetration of the material. Especially instructive in this connection is the master among the Dante illustrators of this period—Botticelli. He, who certainly did understand unity in composition, uses with complete consistency this discursive treatment. Without the slightest hesitation he often shows us Dante and Virgil on the same page in different situations: indeed, he does not scruple to present, in the third canto of the *Paradiso*, the head of the poet in two different positions in order to express a turn of the head. And finally he applied only the freest methods of depicting a scene and telling a

\* "Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft," VII., 1884, p. 406.

story—viz., pen drawing—after he had convinced himself, through experience with four pages in body-colour, one of which he did not even finish, of the disadvantages attaching to such an undertaking.

To the more important manuscripts of the second group the following belong in almost chronological order:—

Florence, Laurenziana, Plut. 40, No. 7, first half of fourteenth century (Batines, 11). Originally the *Inferno* alone was illustrated, while the pictures to the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* are of later date, and will be further discussed below as imitations of Venetian wood-cuts. The illustrations (sixty-five in number) are indeed coloured, but only very lightly, and in water colours; they are conceived as marginal drawings, not as pictures complete in themselves, as the want of a frame round them shows. The execution is still awkward—nay, coarse; but the illustrator is set upon narrating. He applies the discursive principle, and since he leaves no important scenes undepicted, he soon piles up a very considerable quantity of pictures. Thereby the codex marks principally a stage more susceptible of development than do those which are decorated with real miniatures, although it agrees with them fully in many types (*e.g.*, with Florence, Nazionale, Palatina 313). A point which must be specially emphasised is that Dante here has a full beard. In Bassermann, on Plate 16, the scene to *Inferno* 3 is copied.

Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal, No. 8530, likewise dating from the first half of fourteenth century (Batines, 445), is illustrated throughout with rather coarse drawings on the lower margin, which are withal often in a very bad state of preservation. Auvray, who describes the manuscript under No. XVIII., says of them: "*Mais ce sont là des illustrations très grossières, qui ne méritent pas d'être décrites avec détails.*" That is certainly the case artistically; iconographically, however, this manuscript offers an object of great interest, as being the earliest clear instance of quite a new and special tendency of Dante illustration, which we meet more and more in

course of time among the free margin drawings. The artist, that is, does not confine himself only to a delineation of the actual events seen and experienced by Dante on his journey; but, entirely carried away by his subject and affected by the metaphorical language of the poet, he also introduces scenes into the realm of his representation which are merely described in narrative or only serve as similes. If the vivacity and clearness of description, on the one hand, gain considerably by this, yet we must not fail to recognise that the danger of digression into the unessential was not far distant; most illustrators, moreover, have not escaped it. The codex was evidently originally intended to be provided with real miniatures, for in the first canto there are framed compositions which have yet remained in the stage of mere sketches. Further, however, there are free pen sketches, partly roughly coloured by a later hand. How profoundly the illustrator busied himself with his material, and how this misled him to depict many scenes which had no direct bearing on the action, may be shown by several examples.

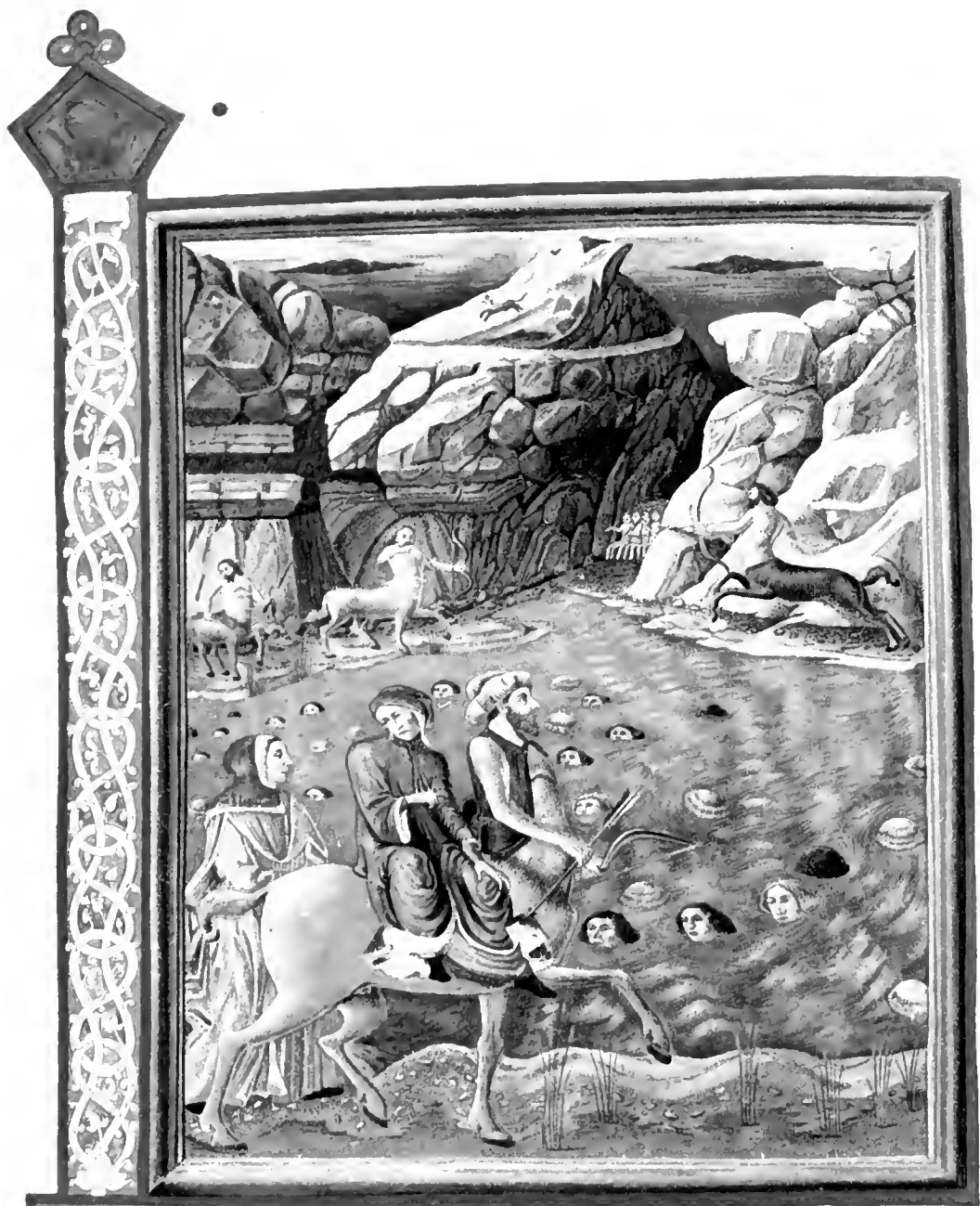
In the seventeenth canto of the *Purgatorio* the visions which Dante had are described individually. We see Haman, who is lying crucified on the ground; beside him stand King Ahasuerus, Esther, and Mordecai (lines 25-30). Then follows, in three groups, a detailed representation of the myth of Philomela. Dante himself merely mentions this vision in the few words:

"Pourtray'd before me came  
The traces of her dire impiety,  
Whose form was changed into the bird that most  
Delights itself in song."

PURGATORIO, Canto 17, lines 19-22 (Cary's translation).

But the painter goes much farther, and shows us Philomela lying on the ground, while Tereus pulls her tongue out; then how she cut in pieces the little Itys with a knife. And in the last one we see a table covered with dishes, at which three persons are seated: Tereus is consuming his own son.





Ra toloco oue a scender la ruua  
venimmo al pestro. & per quel che uera ancho  
tal chegni uilla ne farebbe schiua  
Quale quella ruua che nel fianco

Der alte Mann führt Bante auf seinem Rücken und Vingt  
an dem blutigen Entlang zur Fort; H. IIe, Gesang XII

Miniature to Interno XII.

$$t_{\text{eff}} = t \left( 1 - \frac{\alpha}{2} \right) \quad \text{for } t < t_0$$



In Purgatorio 18 there is a genre picture of the departure of the children of Israel. In front is a dog and a laden ass; then follows a bearded man in a long garment; behind him three women, a child, and a man. Now in the poem itself the souls, under penance, among the examples of punished idleness, only cry out (lines 134-35):

"First they died, to whom the sea  
Open'd, or ever Jordan saw his heirs."

The same is to be found in the twenty-sixth canto of the Purgatorio, in which the unnatural lust of Pasiphae, likewise named only as a warning example, is described with a certain delight. We see the two poets, beside them souls in mutual embrace, and farther off three kine; one of them, from out of whose breast a woman's face peeps, is covered by a steer.

" . . . Nella vacca entra Pasife  
Perchè il torello a sua lussuria covra" (lines 41, 42).

In the next canto, lastly, the antecedent of a simile is illustrated, as frequently happens later. Pyramus lies, pierced by his sword, on the ground; before him kneels Thisbe, lamenting, surrounded by spectators, among whom are the two poets.

"As at Thisbe's name the eye  
Of Pyramus was open'd (when life ebb'd  
Fast from his veins), and took one parting glance,  
While vermeil dyed the mulberry; thus I turn'd  
To my safe guide, relenting, when I heard  
The name that springs for ever in my breast."

PURGATORIO, Canto 27, lines 37-42.

One can see that this illustrator was not satisfied with the traditional types, but attempted individually and originally to make himself master of his material. In Paradise he always shows only one circle, in which stand Dante and Beatrice, the latter bearing a crown, as well as the persons who are introduced speaking, the cross made by the saints, the eagle, and many other things.



## 62 *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.*

Florence, Bibl. Nazionale, Magliabechiana, Conv. C. 3, No. 1266, fourteenth century (fragmentary), likewise shows with faulty execution attempts towards an independent conception. Bassermann reproduces on Plate 17 the scene where Jason, clad as a knight, deserts the deceived Hypsipile. This scene also Dante does not see in the "Comedy"; the fact is only related (*Inferno* 18, lines 86-95).

Modena, Estense VIII. G. 6, second half of fourteenth century (Batines, 227). This codex is illustrated throughout, and indeed by one artist. Each page has on the upper margin an illustration, drawn with the pen and but slightly tinted in watercolour, so that the contour remains the most important thing. The *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio* are very vividly and beautifully illustrated. In the *Paradiso* Dante and Beatrice, surrounded by angels and the conversing saints, stand always in a meadow, while above them one can see the celestial spheres, blue, with red beams. The steadily increasing lustre of Beatrice and the rest of the blessed is expressed, with originality, by means of an ever increasing number of red beams. Scenes almost identical are frequently repeated. The painter wanted to illustrate each page, and did not know whence he could find material, in the *Paradiso*, for several pictures to one canto. For all that, the manuscript is to be ranked among the most interesting and painstaking solutions of the problem of the illustration of the "Divine Comedy" which the Trecento has to offer.

Naples, Bibl. Nazionale, XIII. C. 4, end of fourteenth century. The representations are mere pen-and-ink sketches, and for that very reason very smart and stirring. Unfortunately only fragments are extant—namely, *Inferno* 14-32 and *Purgatorio* 8-12, with sketches; at the end, a few cantos of the *Paradiso* without illustrations. The scenes are, in part, conceived with the greatest originality. As proof of this *Inferno* 30 may serve. The body of Adam of Brescia, the forger of base coin, is distended with dropsy, "like a lute" (lines 49-51), and the artist draws him as a lute,

with human head, arms, and legs (Bassermann, Plate 19; also Plate 18, Inferno 22; and Plate 20, Inferno 25). The pictures of the Purgatorio are by another and less delicate hand, and in them, too, the conception is not so good. Those scenes which are brought before the penitent as pictures and reliefs, for purification, or else intimated to them by voices, are always presented here as special occurrences, throughout which Dante and Virgil stand as spectators—*e.g.*, David before the Ark of the Covenant, Trajan's Justice, the Fall of the Angels, Rehoboam's Flight, the Ruins of Troy, and the like.

Venice, Marciana, Class IX., No. 276, second half of fourteenth century. This beautiful manuscript contains two hundred and forty-five large illustrations, commonly explained as belonging to Giotto's school—an explanation which is so far correct, in that they are undoubtedly Florentine. The pictures are by two different hands. Those to the Inferno and Purgatorio are on the one hand very well drawn and only lightly decorated in parts; although provided with a light framing, they yet must be ranked in this group. Several times—Inferno 15, twice in Inferno 28, Inferno 33, Purgatorio 8, 9, twice in Purgatorio 17, 18—there is a sign added in brown or red colour with the pen, evidently a monogram or signature of the artist, which, however, unfortunately cannot be interpreted; thus . In Inferno 4 it is somewhat different, . Fresh, original conception goes hand in hand here with the ability of the artist,—a certain realistic touch lends a peculiar character to the scenes, and is sometimes carried too far. Thus, in Inferno 28, Curio exhibits his mouth wide open; the tongue has been cut out, and he carries it on a string in his hand. The good examples for the penitent, as also Dante's visions in purgatory, are conceived here also as actual occurrences; but they are depicted much more elegantly and fully than in the Neapolitan codex, and frequently even the metaphors and similes of the poet are

illustrated. For instance, at lines 136-39, in the thirtieth canto of the *Inferno*, where Dante compares himself to a dreamer, there is a representation of the poet lying in a great canopied bed. In the same canto, Athamas, who seeks to crush his son Learch, is pourtrayed; while on the right Ino, with his other son, springs into the water. This tale Dante mentions merely by way of simile, to illustrate the ferocity with which the damned bite each other; and yet the painter seized upon the scene, and used it as an independent illustration, on an equal footing with the real illustrations of the text. From the pen of the first artist there is a charming scene, too, at the beginning of the *Paradiso*. Apollo, represented as a young, chivalrous bard with long fair locks, sits strumming his fiddle under a tree, and before him kneels Dante. This connects itself with the invocation of Apollo as Musagetes in the first canto of the *Paradiso*, lines 13-15.

"Benign Apollo! this last labour aid,  
And make me such a vessel of thy worth  
As thy own laurel claims, of me beloved."

The remaining pictures to the *Paradiso* are not so well drawn, and they are completely coloured in a rough fashion. They present, in a deep blue sky, the sign of the respective planet or star cluster; on both sides Dante and Beatrice, either alone or else engaged in conversation with some of the blessed, who are introduced as speaking from time to time. The best part of these pictures is the occasional appearance of the pretty costumes of the time. The scene to Canto 30 is peculiar: Dante kneels before the stream of light, which is represented as a yellow brook with grass-grown banks; Beatrice stands by him. In the brook and on the banks we can see the "living sparks," which, in accordance with Dante's words, "*Quasi rubini, ch' oro circoscrive,*" are described literally as red circles with a golden edge.\* The conclusion is formed by several very large illustrations, with the

\* The miniaturist of the Egerton Codex 943, in the British Museum, depicts them on the other hand as golden circles with a red edge.

Madonna on the throne, surrounded by angels and saints. Bassermann has reproduced five pictures from this manuscript: on Plate 39 to Inferno 30 and Paradiso 1, on Plate 40 to Purgatorio 12, on Plate 41 to Purgatorio 15, on Plate 42 to Inferno 5. This latter plate gives a very instructive juxtaposition of the scenes of Paul Malatesta and Francesca da Rimini, from our manuscript and the Vatican Codex, No. 365. The Florentine painter of the Trecento represents both very naïvely in the costume of the time, but the upper Italian of the fifteenth century presents with evident love the nude bodies and a rich and interesting landscape in perspective. Kraus reproduces (figs. 40-42) Purgatorio 10 and 32 and Paradiso 1.

Closely related with this manuscript is

Rome, Vaticana 4776, end of fourteenth century (Batines, II. 326). Apart from the first two pictures to the Inferno, which are miniatures in body-colour, we find, in this instance, the whole of the illustrations treated as coloured drawings; the colours are thinly laid on, and the parchment can be seen through them. The Inferno alone, and a few cantos of the Paradiso as far as Canto 11, are illustrated. In the Inferno indeed the artist sticks, in general, very closely to the ruling types; he does not, however, feel contented with these, but adds much that is original and interesting from his own idea, specially delighting to choose his pictures from the similes of the poet, whereby several whimsicalities make themselves evident. Thus in Inferno 4 there is a representation of Dante in a house, lying in a half erect position on the bed, and raising his hands in astonishment. One requires some time to recognise therein the illustration to the first lines of the canto:

"Broke the deep slumber in my brain a crash  
Of heavy thunder, that I shook myself,  
As one by main force roused."

In the seventh canto a description of the "wheel of fortune,"

tacked on to a conversation of the poet's concerning the Fortune (lines 61-96), is very striking. Fortuna, a woman in a long blue garment, holds a large wheel, on whose most elevated point sits a king, while on both sides there is represented a man, the one climbing up, the other climbing down; underneath hangs a bald-headed beggar. In Canto 26 the illustrator gives a vivid picture of Ulysses' narrative of the shipwreck, and in Canto 30 the story of Athamas is depicted as in the previous codex, while another picture in the same canto represents the raging Hecuba by the corpse of Polydorus.

The few scenes of the Paradiso have got no farther than the pen sketch; only the second has received the gold ground, which we may assume was to be given to all. This painter, too, was not equal to the task of the Paradiso; he presents continually Dante and Beatrice, as well as quite common, though very beautifully drawn, groups of the blessed, who gaze up at the head of Christ as the final object, of which they all strive to obtain a sight. But on the other hand a drawing in the second canto demonstrates how deeply the artist had penetrated the contents of the poem: he gives an explanatory picture of the optical experiment with the three mirrors, which Dante mentions in lines 97-101.

Several of the most interesting pictures are reproduced in Bassermann: on Plate 35 the title-page to the Purgatorio, on Plate 36 Inferno 6 and 7, on Plate 37 Inferno 4 and 26, on Plate 38 Inferno 30.

Upon a like level stands the well-known codex in Altona, Gymnasialbibliothek, end of fourteenth century and beginning of fifteenth (Batines, 532). The illustrations are by three artists. The first still belongs to the fourteenth century, as does also, I think, the second; but the last is on a decidedly higher level, and must be assigned to the fifteenth century. The first series comprehends the Inferno only. In execution very stiff and awkward, the lightly coloured scenes yet show a good grasp of the subject. The artist evidently knew the poem well—a matter which one is tempted to doubt in the



case of so many Dante illustrators; and he delights likewise especially to spend his attention on the metaphors and similes. For the twenty-seventh canto of the *Inferno* the tyrant Phalaris of Agrigentum is depicted, to whom Perillus shows the brazen bull he has fashioned, because the cries of the damned are likened to the bellowing which the glowing mass of brass gave out when a man was pitched into it.

Rather more superficial is the second painter, who illustrates *Purgatorio* 1-28 likewise in lightly coloured drawings; often he repeats similar scenes merely to fill up space, and he is too fond of portraying things which are only mentioned by way of comparison. In *Purgatorio* 23, for example, the passage,

"On the green leaf mine eyes were fix'd, like his  
Who throws away his days in idle chase  
Of the diminutive birds, when thus I heard," etc. (lines 1-3),

is illustrated as follows: On the left stand Dante and Virgil; on the right a tree and a knight with a falcon on his hand; in the air hover three brightly coloured birds. In the following canto the sea is depicted with a sailing-boat, towards which the two poets look, as in lines 3 and 4: "We paced nimbly along in converse, like a ship driven by a favouring wind." But it is just this peculiarity of the artist, on the other hand, which we have to thank for the occasionally very attractive genre pictures—among others, for a delightful representation in *Inferno* 29 of a company of young Sieneſe ſpendthrifts. Six young men stand round a table, which is garnished with bread, fowl, fish, and wine; on the right two trumpeters and a drummer provide the feast music. Dante wears in these pictures a full beard.

With *Purgatorio* 29 begins the work of the third artist, which unfortunately ends with the thirty-second canto. The scenes are only sketched with the pen,—it may be that they were conceived only as drawings,—and are of brilliant execution. Fine arrangement, a right comprehension of the poem,

excellent technical skill, place these drawings alongside the best illustrations to the "Divine Comedy," and make a worthy preparation for the studies of Sandro Botticelli. The "History of Italian Literature" (Leipzig, Bibliographical Institute) will give wood-cut reproductions from the Altona codex of the battle of the devils in the lake of pitch (Inferno 22) and Dante's meeting with Beatrice (Purgatorio 30).



Pen Drawing to Purgatorio 29.  
*From the Codex Altona.*

London, Brit. Museum, Additional MSS. 19587, second half of fourteenth century, offers a certain contrast to the manuscripts we have just discussed. The illustrations, which are artistically of great value, are rather more in the usual run of such pictures, although the painter strenuously applies the discursive principle, and evidently labours to describe with vividness. As far as Purgatorio 23 inclusive there are, although not in all the cantos, lightly coloured pen-and-ink

sketches, in which for the most part only Dante and Virgil are executed in colours, while souls and devils are merely sketched or shaded in sepia. From Purgatorio 24 to 33 the codex contains pen-and-ink sketches by another and inferior hand, the colouring of the first of which has been begun. Several original traits of this illustrator are rather to be called singular than happy, as, for instance, when in the first canto of the *Inferno* he represents Virgil as a saint in a mandorla, and in Canto 2 gives him a sceptre with a lily thereon in his hand; or again when in Canto 3 he represents Charon as a horned devil with a club in his hand standing on a pulpit-like erection, which is constructed on the bows of a well-rigged sailing-ship. Scenes on the contrary which are especially important and characteristic are often not illustrated: thus in *Inferno* 21 the Elder of Lucca is wanting, a personage who did not so easily escape the notice of other artists; and Ugolino and Roger even are not described in the last song of the *Inferno*. The chief strength of this illustrator lies in his grand figures of old men: the giants, for instance, are nude chained monsters with glorious hoary heads; and in the first two cantos of the *Purgatorio* there is a picture of Cato standing in a halo of rays which is quite a miracle of beauty. The Palæographical Society has published as No. 248 of the miniatures the illustration to Canto 17 of the *Inferno* (Dante, Virgil, and Geryon). The miniature to *Purgatorio* 1 is reproduced by Birch and Jenner, "*Early Drawings and Illuminations in the British Museum*" (London, 1879), and also by Kraus (fig. 48).

To this group also belongs a Trecentine manuscript in the Library of Lord Leicester at Holkham, Norfolk, from which, through the courtesy of M. Léon Dorez in Paris, I saw three photographic reproductions, which the above-named gentleman intends to publish in his book, "*Le Cabinet de Manuscrits de Lord Leicester*."

Several manuscripts, unimportant and illustrated only at the beginning, may be shortly mentioned here.

Milan, Trivulziana, No. 1076, fourteenth century (Batines, 259). Lightly coloured pen-and-ink sketches to Cantos 1, 5, and 6 of the *Inferno*.

Rimini, Bibl. Gambalunga, D. II. 41, fourteenth century (Batines, 404). Lightly coloured, good drawings as far as *Inferno* 8. Dante is depicted here sometimes as a bearded man and sometimes as beardless. Charon beats the souls with his oar—a feature rare in older manuscripts.

Florence, Riccardiana, 1035, end of fourteenth century (Batines, 131). Only seven scattered illustrations to the *Inferno*, lightly coloured. In the other cantos room is left for pictures. Kraus reproduces *Inferno* 17 (fig. 28).

Florence, Laurenziana, Stroziano 148, end of fourteenth century (Batines, 27). The manuscript has been provided with a full-page illustration of Hell, as well as with pen-and-ink drawings on the lower margin, as far as *Inferno* 27 inclusive, by a horribly crude hand; these latter are in any case subsequent additions, for they are crammed into a very narrow margin. These drawings must doubtless be ascribed to some amateur, and the conclusion does not seem unwarranted that a reader, to some extent working from a manuscript accessible to himself, has tried his hand at illustration.

As a specimen of the roughness of illustration in the fifteenth century in many cases, especially outside of Florence, No. 1083 of the Trivulziana at Milan (Batines, 274) may serve. Coloured marginal drawings are, as far as the end of the *Inferno*, in every canto crowded between the pages of the text. The execution is inconceivably rough and awkward; so that here also an amateur may certainly be surmised. The codex is of Venetian origin.

Two Florentine manuscripts from the middle of the fifteenth century have each only one full-page pen drawing at the beginning of the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso*; these are the Nazionale, Magliabechiana, I. 35 (Batines, 113), and Riccardiana, 1028 (Batines, 147). From the latter Kraus has reproduced the *Paradiso* (fig. 31).

Illustrated throughout, however, is

Florence, Laurenziana, Plut. 40, No. 1, of the year 1456 (Batines, 65). This is not a distinguished work of art, but presents us with a specimen of skilled workmanship. To each canto the painter only allowed one picture, and he has consequently depicted only the best-known scenes in typical fashion. The figures are coloured, the conception rather dry and wanting in vivacity. Clever and peculiar is the arrangement of many scenes in the *Paradiso*, where the respective planets are represented as great golden plates, on which stand Dante and Beatrice. Here we find the phenomenon that an artist who in the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* was dealing essentially with generally known types in the *Paradiso*—where so many of such types were not at his command—invented individual traits, and thus produced something quite original.

The circumstance that the codex possesses a twin brother proves too that these illustrations are of a somewhat mechanical description :

Padua, Bibl. del Seminario, No. 67, fifteenth century (Batines, 281), has, except for some trivial deviations, the same series of illustrations, so exactly corresponding in form, colour, and technique that we must unhesitatingly assign it to the same hand as that which produced the manuscript in the Laurenziana. Any one who is acquainted with Botticelli's compositions, which are only twenty years or thereabouts later in date, will scarcely see in these specimens, with all due recognition of their excellence, "*il modello di una edizione della divina commedia con figure*," as Mehus does in his *Vita Ambrosii Traversari*.

London, Brit. Museum, Harleian MSS. 3460, written in 1469 (Batines, 478), possesses pen drawings to the first twenty cantos of the *Inferno* on the lower margin. The execution is very weak, yet there are some interesting features about it. One of these is that of Charon, who, true to Dante's description, beats the souls with his oar; and the conception

of Minos as a king in a long garment, with sword and crown, and holding in his hand a pair of scales, is another. In this illustrator also, as in the case of so many, his interest and delight in his work are far above his technical capabilities.

If we regard the illustrated Dante manuscripts as a whole, we find that they present, in spite of diversities, the picture of a harmonious development. Beginning with the limited methods of miniature, illustration turns more and more to the freer mode of expression of the coloured drawing and the outline sketch. Miniature steps quite into the background, a stunted branch, and dies out in the end after it has enjoyed a final period of beauteous bloom. Illustration in the narrower sense alone remains capable of development,—a higher level can be reached on this basis. But nothing final was yet done even by this latter; a really worthy artistic representation of the “*Divine Comedy*” was not yet attained. Art could not yet take the mighty step forward by which Dante had raised Italian literature into a new stage; in fact, she was utterly overwhelmed in the first instance by the wealth of thought and stimulus, of imagery and scenic effects, which the poet offered to view. The new material was greedily snatched at, and often the most capable illustrators were so possessed with the desire to describe the poem that their desire led them frequently to overlook the essential in the accidental, and to clash both together in a jumbled mass. Dante’s work has been called encyclopædic because scarcely a single realm of the knowledge and life of his time can be imagined of which he did not make mention; and thus the illustrators gladly took the opportunity to describe as much as possible, as I have to some extent endeavoured to show above in a more detailed fashion in reference to individual manuscripts. However justifiable this may be in itself, yet many excrescences and exaggerations went hand in hand with it, whose effects were destructive and confusing, and which had to be gradually eradicated.

The most important result, then, of the illustrated manu-

scripts as a whole is that in them mastery over the material and knowledge of the contents of the problem to be solved was gradually gained, so that later artists could then, without trouble, advance to an intellectual and formal extension of the subject. It is the struggling attempts towards an exact portrayal of the figures of Dante which make those manuscripts so extraordinarily important and interesting, and which justify a detailed study of them. How the ferocious, oar-whacking Charon of Michael Angelo appears to us a matter of course! and yet how slowly and painfully was the knowledge gained through the old illustrators which was to issue in this motive artistically so fruitful! What a brilliant, sharply outlined figure is that of the centaur Cacus in Dante, who springs along covered with snakes while a fire-spitting dragon claws at the nape of his neck! and yet through what an immense number of misconceptions must this figure have passed before it was, even externally, grasped and fixed! Thus a century and a half was consumed merely in attempts to penetrate the material and to develop fixed types, without our being able to say of any single one of all these works that it fully satisfies us. For in all the book illustrators mastery over the form was not sufficiently developed to enable them to breathe into the pictures the palpitating life which surges through Dante's poem, to embody splendid scenes in a splendid form. To attain that a new spirit must first animate art—the spirit of the Renaissance; and a towering artistic individuality must apply himself to the task.





### CHAPTER III.

#### SANDRO BOTTICELLI AND THE "BALDINI" COPPER-PLATES.

IN all probability no other artist of the Renaissance was so well fitted for the work of illustrating the "Divine Comedy" as Sandro Botticelli. "Persona sofistica" (a man of a speculative mind), Vasari calls him; and if we look over the complete work of this spring-fresh master, we see in it all that tendency to the mystic allegorical, to the sensual supersensual, that strange mixture of tender fancy and sound realism, which is such a charming feature of his Dante drawings. Even in a few panel pictures Botticelli's intimate knowledge of the "Divine Comedy" finds expression,—as, for instance, in the interesting though immature "Ascension of Mary" in the National Gallery of London, which was painted for the poet Matteo Palmieri before 1475. The Rose of Heaven, formed here by the celestial bands in nine concentric rows, in the midst of which the Madonna kneels before God's throne, is reproduced exactly from Dante's conception. A likeness of the poet from the hand of Botticelli, at present in a private collection in England, I unfortunately do not know; but it too suggests his reverence for Dante. It is surely a misconception when Vasari goes the length of saying that he (Botticelli) provided part of the Comedy with a commentary; but we at least safely learn for certain from his statement that the artist's enthusiastic and reflective spirit deeply pierced the secrets of the divine poem, and that he could reproduce from his very soul that which unceasingly formed the object of his industry. In addition to Vasari, let us hear what another



authentic source has to tell us of Botticelli's illustrations to Dante. This is a manuscript of the sixteenth century in the Biblioteca Nazionale at Florence (Gaddiano 17, Class XVII.), which contains "Notices of Florentine Artists from Cimabue to Michael Angelo," and runs: "Dipinse et storio un Dante in cartapecoro a lorenzo die piero francesco de Medici il che fu cosa maravigliosa tenuta."

From these witnesses we have indubitable testimony that Botticelli illustrated on parchment a copy of Dante for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici; but not until a few years ago was this grand work rescued from the oblivion in which it had long slumbered by a happy combination of circumstances. At the same time it was made accessible to the general public in a worthy publication. Formerly the drawings were, for the most part, in the manuscript collection of the Duke of Hamilton, at Hamilton Palace, Scotland, where they were as good as non-existent. No wonder that while they were there only one man was able to make mention of them in recent literature—viz., Waagen, in his "Treasures of Art in Great Britain," Vol. III., p. 307; yet even he was only favoured with a very hurried inspection of the treasures of the Duke's collection, and he could not devote a closer attention to the drawings, the connection of which with Botticelli in general struck him at once.

In 1882, after the Hamilton collection had passed through a sale into the possession of the Berlin museums, the importance and worth of the work was first justly recognised and estimated; and a short time afterwards, in 1887, Dr. Josef Strzygowski, by a happy chance, discovered eight leaves belonging to the manuscript, but separated from it at an early time, which are to be found in a volume of miscellanies in the Vatican at Rome, Codici della Regina di Svezia, No. 1896, fol. 97-103. Colomb de Batines (*Bibliografia Dantesca*, No. 331) saw them and admired them, without, however, recognising the hand of Botticelli.

That we have before us a real specimen of the work of

Botticelli is not only proved by the adduced documentary evidence; the whole style of the drawings too: the type of the heads, with their fine, rather melancholy expression; the thin, fluttering garments; the long, slim hands, often expressively curved;—everything points to Botticelli with infallible certainty, and in addition to all that his complete signature undoubtedly testifies his authorship. In the illustration to the twenty-eighth canto of the *Paradiso*, namely, one of the little plates held in the hands of angels bears in small but distinct writing the full name, Sandro di Mariano, which Lippmann gives on an enlarged scale in the text which accompanies the reproductions of the drawings. Lippmann's guess, that "the inscription perhaps only expressed the master's pious wish that his name might not be forgotten in the beatific circle," shows a very delicate perception, and we may well ascribe such a train of thought to the master. The inscription has nevertheless the full value of a signature of the work.

As we see from the foregoing, the whole was originally nothing more than an illustrated parchment manuscript, the pages of which contain on the one side the text, on the other the drawings. The work, then, must be considered as related to the manuscripts in the closest way. But, on the other hand, these drawings are works of art of so material a value, and their influence upon the further history of the Dante illustration was so great and lasting, that a special consideration is due to them; they ought not to be ranged simply alongside the other manuscripts. As for the time of the genesis of the work, the copper-prints of the Dante edition of 1481—still to be mentioned—which are prepared from Botticelli's compositions, give an approximate source of information; at least as far as the nineteenth canto of the *Inferno* the drawings must have been finished in the year 1481. There are still preserved, of the whole, ninety-three pages with drawings—namely, a title-page with a full representation of Hell, *Inferno* 1, 8–10, 12–34, then *Purgatorio* 1 as far as *Paradiso* 30, and lastly the beginning of the sketch to

Paradiso 32. In the possession of the Royal Print Collection at Berlin eighty-five pages of these are to be found. For the sake of better preservation they have been stretched separately on *passe-partouts*. They are Inferno 8, then Inferno 17 to Paradiso 30, and Paradiso 32. They were issued as a whole in 1887, by F. Lippmann, in excellent reproductions, original size, with an explanatory description, while in 1896 an English edition appeared (London: Lawrence & Bullen). Paradiso 3 is besides reproduced in the "Jahrbuch der Kgl. Preuss. Kunstmuseen" (Vol. 4), Purgatorio 29 in Ulmann's Botticelli, and the "Italienische Literaturgeschichte" will reproduce, by wood engraving, the illustrations to Inferno 8, Purgatorio 1, and Paradiso 3. In E. Steinmann's Botticelli Inferno 31, Purgatorio 1, 9, and 30, Paradiso 1, 7, and 28 are copied, and Kraus has reproduced (figs. 57-62) Inferno 1, Purgatorio 29-32, and Paradiso 15. The other eight pages are in the Vatican, and were published in the same way as those of Berlin by Dr. J. Strzygowski. They are the illustrations to Inferno 1, 9-13, 15-16, as well as the synoptical page of the Inferno; so that, since in Paradiso 31 and 33 the respective pages on which the drawings ought to appear are left in white and therefore the drawings for them were not finished, only the illustrations to Cantos 2-7, 11, and 14 of the Inferno are lost to us. And we can arrive at least at an approximate idea of the general arrangement of these pages, since we possess the prints of the Florentine edition of 1481 to these cantos; and on the other hand also, Botticelli's complete representation of Hell, although on a very small scale, produces for all that his conception of the respective scenes. The pages were lightly sketched by Botticelli with a silver point, the marks of which in many cases still remain, and were then finished in black and brown with the brush. Several pages are coloured—for example, the synoptical page of the Inferno, Inferno 15 and 18; lastly, in Inferno 10 only the garments are painted in body-colour. It is indeed an undisputed assumption that the

artist himself desired originally—perhaps on the wish of the patron—to present coloured pages; but he soon renounced the idea, since he came to consider it a mistaken one. When we consider the hard and dry execution of the coloured pages, the conjecture of H. Ulmann, that not Botticelli himself, but a miniaturist by profession, was entrusted with this task, has much in its favour. If that be true, we must not regard the drawings as uncompleted miniatures, but we see the complete work before us as Botticelli, changing his first plan, carried it out. In any case he did not take the work to its end, for, as already mentioned, the drawing to *Paradiso* 32 is only sketched, and the pages to *Paradiso* 31 and 33 are left white. Whether Botticelli perhaps dropped the work on the death of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici in 1503, or whether it occupied him till his own death (May 17th, 1510), cannot be decided in the present state of our knowledge.

Since Botticelli's drawings have been made generally accessible through the publications of Lippmann and Strzygowski, and have been discussed and explained in detail in connection with the text, a description of them individually would be superfluous here; permit me, then, to make a few general remarks. What the illustrated manuscripts of the Trecento and the first half of the Quattrocento have begun here finds its completion. Many personages and types which were known and current in the miniatures and drawings of an earlier time we again meet in Botticelli. The figures of Vanni Fucci for instance, of Agnello Brunelleschi, of the centaur Cacus in the twenty-fifth canto of the *Inferno*, in the *Purgatorio* the griffin with the Chariot of the Church, and others, offer, when compared with the like figures in the Modena and Altona codices, highly interesting proofs of Botticelli's adherence to tradition in the first two parts. As a specimen of this, too, we may see that he has not shaken off the residue of mediæval prejudice by which the old-world personages, as Charon, Minos, Pluto, Cerberus, Phlegias, were represented as devils. But what a difference from the earlier illustrations! What was there fettered

is here free; what was there lifeless is here touched with mighty energy and movement. Nowhere are there petty digressions; all is necessary and essential. He obeys eagerly withal, especially in the *Inferno*, the discursive principle, as a vivid describer should, and thereby attains such an astonishing grasp of the fearfully stirring events of the nether world that in the succession of scenes he makes us, as it were, live through them in the order of their occurrence. If, for instance, in *Inferno* 21 a demon bears the Councillor of Lucca head downwards through the air, pitches him over his head with a powerful swing, and we then see him whiz through the air into the lake of pitch, that is a method of description quite permissible to the draughtsman, and artistically very effective. Botticelli is, besides, the first among the Dante illustrators who was susceptible to the keen artistic enjoyment of the Renaissance spirit in the drawing of the nude human form, for which the *Inferno* offered such a glorious opportunity. Figures in pose like his giants in the thirty-first canto, which really tower aloft "like steeples," the miniaturist even of the Vatican Codex 365 has not created. Doubtless many of the scenes of the *Inferno* are at first sight very turbulent and confusing; but Dante himself strides through the place of terrors with fear and perplexity, and one picture comes chasing after the other in incessant change. The poem itself also heaves and surges along, in the first part, in the full tide of excitement, only to quieten down by degrees in the *Purgatorio*, and to rise at last in the *Paradiso* to a state of translucent tranquillity and blissful delight. But it is just in the *Paradiso* that Botticelli shows his skill. Here we have no longer the kaleidoscopic pictures of the *Inferno*, which follow one another in rapid succession; and here the artist shows that he could create finished compositions when the subject demanded it. He does not require to resort to the expedient so frequently employed—viz., to describe pictorially the contents of conversations; he often represents only Dante and Beatrice, at the most only those personages engaged in conversation and the events narrated. That the long series of

compositions, apparently so similar, does not become monotonous and fatiguing, but rather gains with closer acquaintance, and offers a depth of the purest artistic enjoyment to the connoisseur, is due solely to the grace of form therein displayed, and to that which no one before had attempted—viz., to the spiritual expression of his personages. The form of Beatrice he has, as it were, created anew. She is no more the woman of earth, who is only placed, outwardly speaking,



Sandro Botticelli: The Giants, *Inferno* 31.

in another world by the halo of golden beams: greater of stature than mortal man, she appears as the celestial conductress to God, the embodiment of divine teaching. At the same time her features bear the stamp of that lovely union of the highest grace with meek resignation, which is characteristic of Botticelli's madonnas also.

In direct connection with Botticelli's drawings stands a series of copper-plates which are usually reckoned to be the

PLATE VII.



Sandro Botticelli.  
*Drawing to Paradise VIII.*





work of the Florentine goldsmith, Baccio Baldini. "Comentò una parte di Dante, e figurò lo Inferno e lo mise in stampa," says Vasari of Botticelli; and this is undoubtedly a reference to the series of copper-plates to be found in a more or less complete state of preservation in the edition of the "Divine Comedy" with the commentary of Christoforo Landino, which the German, Nicolaus Lorenz of Breslau (Italianised, Nicholo di Lorenzo Della Magna), prepared in Florence in 1481. The words "lo mise in stampa" need not be interpreted as meaning that he engraved them with his own hand; they are rather to be understood to mean only that some one else prepared the copper-plates from Botticelli's drawings and got them printed. One is certainly inclined to revert to Baccio Baldini in this connection, of whom Vasari (ed. Milanese, Vol. V., p. 396) says: "Fu seguitato costui (Finiguerra) da Baccio Baldini orefice fiorentino, il quale non avendo molto disegno, tutto quello che fece fu con invenzione e disegno di Sandro Botticelli." But Baldini, of whom we know nothing save through this notice of Vasari, is in the meantime only an empty name to us, with no tangible personality; and so the prints to the Inferno must be considered anonymous, especially as Vasari's account of the origins of copper engraving is of a rather romantic character.

There are prints to the first nineteen cantos of the Inferno which are to be found—scarcely ever in full tally, it is true—in the Florentine edition of 1481 (Bartsch, XIII., Nos. 37-55). Very rare indeed are the copies of the edition which contain all the prints: in most of them there are only one or two illustrations; in very many cases none at all. This last is the case in the parchment copy which Landino dedicated to the Signoria of Florence (Florence, Bibl. Nazionale, Palatina, Banco Rari). The edition, however, was originally meant to contain copper-plates throughout, for there is a space before each canto left for the illustrations. The gigantic undertaking came to grief, probably owing to the difficulties of the new and unusual technique of the art.

The whole series of nineteen prints is reproduced in "Early Italian Engravings," by Reid, and in the text to Lippmann's Botticelli. Besides these, Heineken ("Idée générale," p. 142) publishes the first; Jansen ("Essai sur l'Origine de la Gravure," II., Nos. 9 and 9*b*) and Kraus (figs. 49 and 50), the first and second; Strutt ("Dictionary of Engravers," II., Plate 3) the second; Bassermann ("Dante's Spuren in Italien," Plate 52) the fifth; lastly, Ottley (p. 420) the twelfth. As early as 1768 the "Nachrichten von Künstlern und Kunstsachen" (Leipzig) presented copies of the first two plates, prepared by Michel Keyl, together with a short notice (pp. 279-81). The print to the third canto was copied, reversed, by another, weaker hand (Bartsch, No. 56), and in several copies of the edition this second print is to be found alongside the original. This copy is also published in the fourth part of the "Biblioteca Spenceriana," p. 114, as well as by Reid and Lippmann.

The prints are not direct imitations of the drawings of Botticelli, they are rather free adaptations of them by the engraver. One thing noticeable about them is that he has simplified the compositions amazingly, as was necessary owing to the smaller scale of the work; in some rare cases he added something of his own invention. But for all that the agreement is so marked that one cannot very well question the use of the drawings on the part of the engraver; and when H. Ulmann in his Botticelli concludes from the manifold deviations that Botticelli drew special designs for the engraver of the edition of 1481, and that his occupying himself thus with Dante brought him the patronage of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, yet I would not put faith in this rather complicated hypothesis without very good grounds. The artistic worth of the prints is not great; but still, from many points of view, they are of great importance. In the first place they belong to the very earliest productions of Italian copper-plate engraving, and as such occupy a prominent place in the history of the reproductive arts. They are important also as showing how widespread was the desire to possess an illustrated Dante

even at that time. Hardly had the new art found a footing when it was made profitable in the illustration of the "Divine Comedy." Lastly we can picture to ourselves, at least approximately, the compositions of Botticelli which are lost from these copper-plates—viz., Inferno 2-7, 11, and 14. They give us a compensation, although a meagre one at the best, for this loss.

That the attempt to publish Dante with copper-plates ended at first in failure should not make us wonder. The print has ever been the more dignified branch of graphic art, but it has also been the more limited branch; it was more adapted for single plates than for such an extensive undertaking. The circumstances of the case were far more favourable to the cheaper and more popular mode of expression, which stood ready for use in the printing art—*i.e.*, the wood-cut.





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE WOOD-CUT EDITIONS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY AND THEIR REACTION ON THE MANUSCRIPTS.

THE first wood-cut edition was not long in coming ; it appeared within six years after the copper-plates. The title runs, "La Divina Comedia, col Comento di Cristoforo Landino." At the end are the words, "Fine del Comento di Cristoforo Landino fiorentino sopra la Comedia di Danthe poeta excellentissimo. Et impresso in Bressa per Boninum de Boninis de Raguxi a di ultimo di mazo (*sic*) MCCCCLXXXVII.

The book contains sixty-eight wood-cuts, each occupying a whole page. In the Inferno and Purgatorio an illustration stands at the beginning of each canto ; but in the Paradiso only the first canto has one. Bassermann gives on Plate 51 the page to Inferno 5 in collotype, Kraus publishes Purgatorio 1 (fig. 51). The undertaking cannot be described exactly as a success, although the technical execution of the wood-cuts is extremely clever. The author of these compositions must have been a very spiritless imitator of the models of other men. He does not seem to have read Dante, otherwise he would not in the tenth canto of the Purgatorio (instead of representing in three reliefs the Annunciation, David before the Ark of the Covenant, and the Justice of Trajan), have produced the following scene: Trajan on horseback, before him the widow ; in the air appears the Madonna ; before the emperor stands an empty ox-chariot. Surely a misconceived copy of a very rude kind ! The prints of 1481 have served as far as Inferno 19 as the model, for the individual

figures are repeated almost exactly, although in another arrangement, which was demanded by the form. We must not regard the fact as accidental that here also the commentary of Cristoforo Landino was added. Farther on any illustrated manuscript whatever seems to have been used as a model and prototype; but even then the work was too difficult for the craftsman. Many cantos in the *Purgatorio* are illustrated in the very same way (29 and 32, 30, 31, and 33), and after the first picture to the *Paradiso* he laid the work aside—not to the detriment of the edition.

In Venice—the most important centre of Italian book illustration in those days—the task of illustrating Dante was approached with more good luck and skill, and four important wood-cut editions—in March 1491, November 1491, and in 1493 and 1497—followed closely upon each other.

The title of the first runs, “*Comento di Christoforo Landino fiorentino sopra la comedia di Danthe Alighieri Poeta fiorentino*”; and at the end, “*Finita e lopa delicyto et divo dathe alleghieri poeta fiorētio revista et emēdata . . . Impressi i venesia p. Bernardino benali et Matthio da parma . . . MCCCCLXXXI a di. III. marzo.*” The Venetian publishers were sound men of business; nothing incomplete went from their workshops. They thus handed the work over to a skilled draughtsman, who finished his task in a satisfactory fashion. He was not a genius, he gave nothing new; but he well knew how to extract the good from everything, and how to turn it to good account. He draws elegant little figures, and brings before the eyes of the reader quite prettily all the chief scenes of the poem in his hundred vignettes. An edition of the Comedy, published in 1864 by Daelli & Co., in Milan (*Bibl. rara*, Vol. 41), is ornamented with reproductions of all these little pictures, while Bassermann gives on Plate 54 *Inferno* 7, *Paradiso* 2 and *Paradiso* 17. A. W. Pollard (“*Italian Book Illustrations*,” London, 1894) reproduces *Inferno* 1, and Kraus (figs. 52 and 53) *Inferno* 2 and *Purgatorio* 28.

The illustrations to the first canto of each poem are

full-page, the others are smaller and square. As far as the nineteenth canto of the *Inferno* use was certainly made of the copper-plates, since the illustrators of that time helped themselves without hesitation from all available sources, and this draughtsman was evidently not unacquainted with the Brescian edition. For the rest he used the general types which the illustrated codices offered. In the *Paradiso* a scene in heaven is always represented in the upper part, while below is some occurrence on earth, of which mention is made in the canto in question. This treatment, too, is not new; it is to be found, for instance, in the miniatures of Codex B. A., p. 1, N. 5, of the Magliabechiana in Florence, Bibl. Nazionale (*vide* pp. 43 and 44). The sixth canto especially is remarkably similar in the manuscript and the printed edition. In the one as in the other we see in the star-spangled heaven Dante and Beatrice, round whom hover many spirits, in converse with the Emperor Justinian, while on earth the "triumphs of the Roman eagle" narrated by the emperor are illustrated by means of well-equipped men on horse and on foot, who bear the imperial eagle on shield and banner. Ofttimes there are explanatory notes in the Venetian dialect, as, "S. IACOBO MAZORE," "IXOLA DE CICILIA," and others. Dante and Virgil are betokened by a D. and a V. Many of the illustrations bear (evidently as a signature) a little b. Such letters as b, f, F, i, J, L, n are found in the illustrations to the other Dante editions, and indeed they occur in many other Venetian wood-cuts. The attempt has been made to read these as the initial of the name of the painter, and to bring the letter b into connection with the names Bellini, Barbari, Benedetto Montagna, Buonconsiglio, and others. But the researches of French scholars have decisively shown that, on the one hand, wood-cuts with different letters show exactly the same style, and that, on the other hand, many pages with like signature are so different that they cannot be the work of one artist; all that remains is to suppose that the letters indicate the names of

the xylographers. When we consider the wonderfully fine technique of many of these wood-cuts, we can quite comprehend that the engraver, proud of his artistic ability, marked the block with the initial of his name.

The edition of Benali and Matheo da Parma must have been popular, for as early as November of the same year another publisher brought out an imitation: "*La Divina Commedia col Comento del Landino*"; and at the end, "*Et Fine del Comento di Christofoero Landino Fiorentino sopra la comedia di Danthe poeta excellētissimo. Et impresso in Vinegia per Petro Cremonese dito Veronese: Adi. XVIII. di novebrio. M.CCCC.LXXXI.*" The wood cut to *Inferno* 8 is published in Lippmann's "*Italian Wood-Engraving in the Fifteenth Century*," and that to *Purgatorio* 19 in Walter Crane's "*Of the Decorative Illustration of Books Old and New*" (London, 1896), as well as in A. W. Pollard's "*Italian Book Illustrations*" (London, 1894). The edition is an almost exact copy of the former, but the full-page illustrations are omitted, the wood-cuts are all nearly of the same size and slightly enlarged. The letter b appears here (*Inferno* 20) also.

An exact repetition of the edition of Benali and Matheo da Parma of March 1491 is found in the following, which appeared in November 1493, likewise in Venice, from the hand of Matheo da Parma alone. Its colophon runs: "*Finita e lopa dellinclyto et divo Dathe alleghieri poeta fiorētino, . . . Impressa in Venetia per Matheo di chodeca da parma Del M.CCCC.LXXXIII. Adi. XXIX. de Novembre.*" It contains the same three full-page wood-cuts, merely with a trifling alteration in the borders, and the same ninety-seven small vignettes; so that what was said before in reference to the first applies also in this case.

The fourth and last of these editions bears the printer's note: "*Impresso in Venetia per Piero de zuanne di quarengii da palazago bergamasco. Del M.CCCC.LXXXVII. Adi. IX. octubrio.*" Kraus (fig. 54), gives the wood-cut to *Inferno* 1. This edition also is a mere copy, and indeed it is exactly

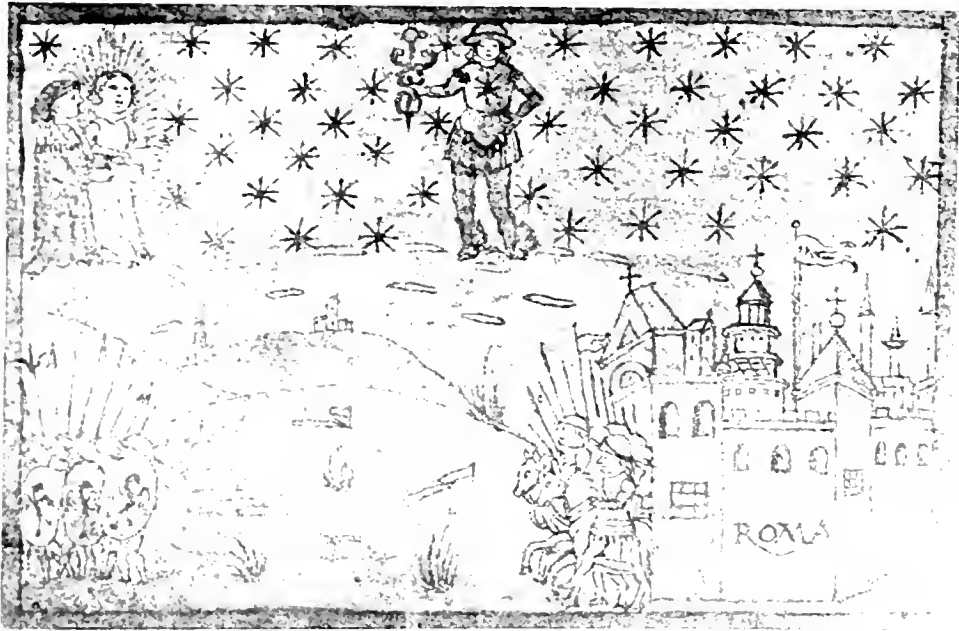
prepared from that of 1493, whether with the approbation of Matheo da Parma may be left undecided. These wood-cuts were evidently held in such high esteem that people were glad to spare themselves the trouble of getting a new series drawn. In fact, until well into the sixteenth century the Venetian editions of the Quattrocento were simply copied—a circumstance of which more will be said later.

Another influence of the wood-cuts, however, which they very soon began to exercise is more interesting: not only were they imitated over and over again in the printed copies, but formed, as they themselves originally were, after the types of the miniatures and pen sketches in the manuscripts, they served also in their turn again as prototypes for illustrated codices. This is quite easily accounted for. A book which was merely printed was, in the early days of printing, by no means esteemed so valuable as a written and illuminated book, and so the oldest printed editions of the Comedy are frequently decorated with coloured initials and ornamentation after the ancient fashion. The simple black and white of the wood-cut illustrations, on the other hand, often did not content the possessors, and they proceeded themselves to deck the pictures out in colours. All this suggests a close connection between book printing and book painting. Let us now assume that a manuscript existed only having pictures to the Inferno, as was very often the case: what was more natural than for the possessor to have the book completely illustrated after the fashion of some convenient and well-known model which he could easily procure? A specimen of this kind is

Codex Plut. 40, No. 7 of the Laurenziana at Florence. In origin as early as the first half of the fourteenth century, this manuscript was provided with coloured drawings only as far as the end of the Inferno (*vide* p. 59). After the appearance of the Venetian edition of Benali and Matheo da Parma, and obviously very soon thereafter, both the Purgatorio and the Paradiso began to be illustrated. Those pictures are literal copies of the wood-cuts, slightly altered in size and propor-



PLATE VIII.



Miniature to Paradiso VI

*From the Codex Plut. 49, No. 2, of the Laurentian Library at Florence.*



Wood Cut to Paradiso VI.



Wood-Cut to Paradiso XVII.

*From the Venice Edition (Muss., 146), Biondo.*





Miniature to Paradiso XVII.



tions; they are also executed in colour, though very badly. In the notes the Venetian dialect of the prototype is often corrected. Bassermann gives on Plate 54 *Paradiso* 2. I am able to reproduce on Plate 8 the miniature to *Paradiso* 6 alongside the corresponding wood-cut.

Another manuscript of a like kind is

No. L. III. 17 of the *Bibl. Nazionale* at Turin. This contains only the *Inferno*, with a French translation alongside, and dates from the end of the fifteenth century. Illustrations are added only to Cantos 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6. They are large pen-and-ink sketches, shaded in brown and bluish gray, in Renaissance architectural borders different in each case, with arabesques and *putti*. Both in the arrangement of the whole and in the individual figures these pages present such a strong relationship with the Venetian wood-cuts that we must undoubtedly assume that they are copied, with modification, from the latter. The figure of Minos, for instance, in the fifth canto is strikingly similar; and this agreement is certainly not accidental, although the painter has executed several scenes from his own invention. Bassermann gives this page on Plate 55, and more recently all the five miniatures have been reproduced in Morel, "*Les plus anciennes traductions françaises de la Divine Comédie*" (Paris, 1897).

As early as the beginning of the sixteenth century (1520) there were produced two connected Parisian manuscripts which require mention here:

Paris, *Bibl. Nationale*, *Nouv. acq. franç.* 4119 (Auvray, XLIII.), contains a French translation of the *Paradiso*—Cantos 1–11 and 15–20 only. Each canto has a miniature of excellent execution (doubtless French), surrounded by a rich Renaissance border. The pictures are copied exactly from the Venetian wood-cuts (no matter which edition), and even the notes have remained, in a French translation. Instead of a further discussion here, I reproduce on Plates 8 and 9 the illustration to the seventeenth canto of the *Paradiso* as it occurs in the manuscript and in the edition of 1491; the

other miniatures correspond in the same way with their respective wood-cuts. It is not uninteresting that in the eighteenth canto the French artist makes the heroes, Roland, Charles le Grât, and Godeffroy, prominent by means of notes, which are wanting in his prototype.

The same remarks apply to the other manuscript:

Paris, Bibl. Nationale, Nouv. acq. franç. 4530 (Auvray, XLIV.), a French translation containing the first seven cantos of the Paradiso. Here also every canto has a miniature, in all probability by the same hand as the former, and likewise in a Renaissance border. All the scenes show an almost exact agreement with the wood-cuts. Only Canto 5 is essentially different: the wood-cut here presents only Dante and Beatrice in the star-spangled heaven, standing between kneeling souls, and underneath we see the same persons strolling about in a landscape, while the miniaturist gives greater detail. The arrangement in heaven is the same, but Dante carries a golden key and a silver one, a misunderstood representation of lines 55-57:

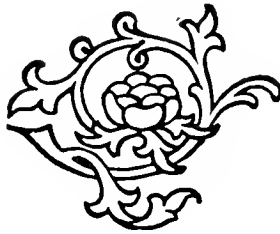
"But, at his own discretion, none may shift  
The burden on his shoulders; unreleased  
By either key, the yellow and the white."

Likewise misunderstood is the scene on earth. In a landscape sits King "IEPTE," who strikes with his sword at the kneeling "EFIGENE"—a commingling of different events from lines 64-72.

Morel has just published in full the miniatures of these two manuscripts as the appendix to his work on the oldest French translations of the Comedy (Welter, Paris, 1897). For these we are grateful, as they assuredly deserve detailed study. The fact that it is in French translations that we find such copies of the wood-cuts is especially interesting and characteristic. The foreign artist was not very well acquainted with the poem, and was obliged to seek for a model for the subject of his representations. As regards his matter he follows this closely, and whenever he quits it

he stumbles seriously; in technical skill and formal execution he leaves it, however, far in the rear. How unlike those Italian artists who tried to follow the poet, almost word for word, even in his metaphors and similes, with their pencil! How unlike also, on the other hand, the Burgundian or Flemish miniaturist of the Codex Ital. 72, of the Bibl. Nationale at Paris (*vide* pp. 39 and 40), whose knowledge was equal only to a quite traditional and provincial representation of the Hell, the Purgatory, and the Paradise of the great poet!

Such examples may serve as proofs of the prestige which the Venetian editions enjoyed. They show at the same time to how great an extent, about the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century, book painting and printed illustrations depended upon and influenced each other.





## PART II.

### *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.*



## CHAPTER I.

### THE CONCEPTION OF THE CINQUECENTO.



THE one-sided view which represents that period which we call the Renaissance as merely a re-creation of the old world, and which affirms that that re-creation is the sole, or at least the chief, characteristic of that golden age of literature and art, has long since been put into the shade. Far from such being the case, the early Renaissance, for long not appreciated as it deserved, the chief feature of which was a fresh straining after truth to nature, is especially close in spirit to the present generation; and we therefore feel more forcibly the new spirit which separates the Cinquecento from the Quattrocento. Fifteenth-century art was certainly touched by the antique; but only separate elements were seized upon with the impetuous joy of youth, to be turned to account, as a rule, playfully and decoratively. Garlands of fruit and *putti* in ornamentation, rich, often fantastic, architectural backgrounds to the pictures, testify to this influence; but a sympathetic penetration and a deeper comprehension of the antique world did not come within the range of the men of those times. The thoroughly modern conception of the antique as a separate and noble world of



civilisation, which we must try to fathom from both the human and the artistic standpoints, was reserved for the sixteenth century. This idea, new in its kind, was born in the first place in the universities, and especially at Padua; and it is no chance circumstance that the antique acquired a substantial influence very early in Paduan art. But classical antiquity bit by bit dragged the entire artistic world within its pale, and maintained its mastery long after the spirit had vanished from it and nought but an empty form was left behind. Now, since the antique world occupies, in a very special way it is true, a considerable space in Dante's poem, the new, modern conception was bound to assert itself prominently also in the illustrations to this poem. Besides the perfection of technique and form, it is the altered conception of the antique which especially imparts to the creations of the Cinquecento such a new and peculiar stamp.

Dante himself was no humanist, no man of the Renaissance, and his acquaintance with classical antiquity coincides exactly with that of a mediæval scholar; he was, however, ignorant of Greek, and only knew the Hellenic world through the medium of Virgil.\* His knowledge of the antique mythological personages he derived from the traditions of mediævalism and from the Latin poets, whom he studied; his whole method, in short, of applying the antique figures symbolically and allegorically is thoroughly mediæval. The external appearance of many of the antique personages he grasped very correctly and in a manner which corresponded with the antique conception. His Cerberus "barks from his three mouths after the fashion of dogs" (*Inferno* 6, 14); he is "hairless on neck and chins" (*Inferno* 9, 99) by reason of the friction of the chains which Hercules has fastened on him. The furies have "a feminine mien and limbs; . . . dark-green hydras were their girdles" (*Inferno* 9, 39-40). His knowledge of the proper

\* As is well known, he never himself speaks, in the Comedy, with a Greek. Virgil always performs the *role* of speaker in such cases, as in the conversation with Ulysses (*Inferno* 26).

shape of a centaur is seen in the line, "Where natures of two kinds were united"—natures, that is, of man and horse (*Inferno* 12, 84). The harpies he describes (*Inferno* 13, 13-14) quite in harmony with the antique:

"Ale hanno late, e colli e visi umani,  
Piè con artigli, e pennato 'l gran ventre."

Their function, to be sure, in Dante's conception of Hell is that of demons. Cerberus, standing metaphorically for greedy desire, torments the gluttons; the furies, along with Gorgon, the polluter of temples, keep guard over the heretics; centaurs and harpies, themselves metaphorically used for deeds of violence, are the taskmasters of those who have done violence either against others or against themselves. This conception of the antique personages as demons and devils continues to be prevalent among the illustrators of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and more or less strongly influences even Botticelli and the illustrated editions. Perhaps it is seen at its height in the miniaturist of Codex No. 54 of the Marciana at Venice, who represents all the creatures of the antique as horrid black devils with claws, horns, and red eyes—*e.g.*, Minos, Pluto, Charon, the minotaurs, the giants, and the centaurs. Others form some of the figures correctly, but still depict many of them as devils, as we have shown above to some extent in our discussion of the separate manuscripts. There is also much that is only half understood: thus in Codex Florence, Nazionale, Palatina 313, there is a naked rider instead of a centaur; and in Codex Rome, Angelica, No. 1102, the harpies are described as large birds with the heads of men, white-haired and bearded. Echoes of the mediæval conception are, however, for a long time especially evident in the figure of Virgil. In Dante the Roman poet was the representative of classical antiquity on the one hand, and on the other the allegorical symbol of human reason; in the illustrations he was amalgamated with the popular legendary conception of the "magician Virgil." In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries he is always represented with

a long beard, and wears a fantastic costume: fur-embroidered cap, an ermine collar on his cloak, or a long gilt-trimmed garment, and a peculiar peaked crown. Only very seldom does he appear bareheaded, and in a kind of antique toga (as in Rimini, Bibl. Gambalunga, No. D, II. 41), or quite naked (as in Rome, Bibl. Barberiniana, XLVI. 54). More frequently he wears the costume of the time, in which it was the general rule to dress the old-world personages—thus in Codex Ital. 74 of the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. In remarkable contrast to this, Virgil appears in a manuscript of the British Museum (Add. MSS. 19587) surrounded by a mandorla, such as is given to saints alone in any other manuscript (*Inferno* 1). There he wears, however, the customary red mantle with the ermine collar and the fur-embroidered cap. In the second canto of the *Inferno* he has, besides, in his hand a sceptre, which has a lily on the upper part.

All that was changed by the new conception of the antique. Classical antiquity began now to be minutely studied; grand works of antique art, which until then had been unknown, were discovered. People felt that they were the descendants of the Romans, and wished to live in their thoughts and forms. Dante's antique figures also were represented as antiquity had formed them. Cerberus is a three-headed dog, not a devil; Charon and Phlegias receive human form; and it is no longer possible for an artist not to know the appearance of a centaur. But yet, when Dante expressly presents a description which deviates from the antique, this must be upheld: when he describes Geryon as a metaphorical representation of deception with a friendly human head, but with an iridescent snake body, the artist must refrain from thinking of the triple-bodied giant of antiquity; and when Dante, misunderstanding Virgil's word "*semihomo*," makes Cacus a centaur, illustration must keep to this idea. The figure of the minotaur, too, differs from the conception of antiquity. Antique art continually represents him as a man with a bull's head. Whether Dante figured him so is

uncertain; when he says, however, "Crete's infamy was to be seen stretched out" (*Inferno* 12, 12)—when he further compares his storming with the rage of a bull who has received its death-blow—one would be more inclined to believe that he had in his mind a bull with the upper body of a man, formed analogously to a centaur. And indeed all the early illustrators of the "*Divine Comedy*," with only one exception (Buda-Pesth manuscript), depict the minotaur in that way; they give him a bull's body with a human head or upper body, often with the horns and ears of a bull besides. The artists are thus quite in the realm of the Middle Ages, for as early as the labyrinth illustrations of the eleventh century the minotaur was reproduced as a bull with a human upper body and with horns. This conception was later generally accepted, even presumably in the Dante manuscripts; and the minotaur was so depicted until a late period. Doré was the first to go back to the antique again and to draw a man with a bull's head.

The old heroes and dames appear now no longer in the costume of the artist's time, but received the antique accoutrements and garments as well as the artist could render them. Virgil especially is now no more the mediæval magician, but the true Roman poet; he is always beardless, and wears the antique dress, on his head usually the laurel chaplet, which is also now Dante's permanent attribute. It need hardly be mentioned that the architecture in the new works, instead of being Gothic as heretofore, now takes the forms of the Renaissance.

The figures of the devils, lastly, undergo an important transformation. Previously these had been depicted as quite fantastic monsters—as hobgoblins with claws, tails, horns, and bats' wings, which "had no longer anything demoniacal in them in their pure devilishness" (Burckhardt), and often indeed produced effects of a humorous rather than terrifying kind. In place of these, actual horror-inspiring demons appear—men with superhuman strength and intensified passions;

while tail, wings, horns, cloven feet, etc., fall essentially into the shade. Fantastic monsters no longer, but human beings horribly distorted by passion, the embodiment of evil,—that is the new conception of the demons who inhabit the place of woe. This conception is infinitely more akin to Dante's own view of the torments of hell as the inward torments of soul begotten of sin itself than the grimacing devils of the middle ages, which rack only the body, not the soul.





## CHAPTER II.

LUCA SIGNORELLI.

THE master who paved the way for the new tendency is Luca Signorelli, of Cortona (about 1441–1523), with his paintings in the Cappella Nuova o della Madonna, called also Cappella di S. Brizio, in the cathedral at Orvieto; he must therefore be discussed here in the closest relation with the Cinquecento, in which indeed fully twenty-three years of his activity fall. In Orvieto he painted between 1499 and 1504—*i.e.*, about the beginning of the new epoch; and the frescoes there are justly considered as the first work in which the artist is seen at his highest level. It is once more—and this is sufficiently characteristic of Italian art—a large cycle of frescoes which stands at the head of the new development; but what a difference between the wall pictures of the Camposanto at Pisa, so nearly related in the subject matter, or those of S. Maria Novella in Florence, and these creations of a modern spirit! The Judgment is here also the theme which Signorelli embodied with powerful dramatic impressiveness on the walls of the chapel. But every trace of mediæval constraint is gone; gone is the slavish and systematic imitation of the old Hell with its bellows and rocky walls, with its fantastically caricatured devils and hideously specialised torment. The arrangement of the whole is no longer defined by literary considerations; the principles of art alone determine the execution. External agreement with Dante is, then, very small—in fact, it is a vanishing quantity in proportion to the grandeur of the work. In spite of that, we may justly call the frescoes in Orvieto a

“painted divine comedy,” for it is just in them that the permanent influence which Dante’s poem exerted on the Italian conception of the Judgment Day makes itself first perceptible.

The artistic plan is not borrowed from the Comedy; we may rather say that the description in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel of S. Matthew is the basis of the illustration of the end of the world. The arch, begun by Fiesole, shows, according to that description, the Judge of the worlds with the heavenly hosts. The chief pictures on the walls, however, describe the appearance of Antichrist, the resurrection of all flesh, the destruction of Jerusalem on the last day, and lastly the Judgment itself—the blessedness of the elect and the ruin of the damned (reproduced in Bassermann, Plates 57–9, and in Luigi Fumi’s work, “Il Duomo d’Orvieto”). If the underlying motive is not inspired by Dante, yet the ruin of the damned shows especially a deep penetration into the spirit of the poem. For the first time we meet here the conception of the “*Terribilità*,” that genuine product of sixteenth-century style. With frightful energy of muscle and expression the demons throw themselves on the host of the condemned, their faces distorted with rage and devilish joy at being able to torment them. Whether the master was influenced by the powerful reliefs of the Pisan school, which are to be seen on the porch columns of the cathedral, and must accordingly have met his gaze every day, is not to be settled, nor yet in how far he was influenced by them. In any case he has far surpassed them. The fact that he revels in the representation of the naked human form, and has attained the greatest triumphs therein, proves him to be a free artist of the Renaissance, with a delight in form, as much as does his mastery over the splendid material and his independent interpretation of it. With a correct theory of the laws and demands of the wall picture, he gives us no dry narrative illustration, but the freely formed creations of the mind of a true artist. He does not transform, like Orcagna, a miniature into a gigantic size,

but he fills up the space left for decoration harmoniously with his work. For the very reason that he does not narrate after the poet, but enters into his feelings, that he only excites in us like emotions to those aroused by the poet, without literally following him, only thus does he approach so close to the latter's innermost being. He has also not neglected to remind us, in one place of his cycle, most unmistakably of his master, Dante. On the wall to the right he gives a representation of the entrance to hell, faithfully detailed from that of Dante. In the background souls are running about wringing their hands in mad despair; a crowd is following a demon, who bears a standard (*Inferno* 3, 52, etc.); Charon, a demon with a bristly beard, is just crossing the floods of Acheron to fetch off the sinners waiting on the bank. Among the latter we can recognise without difficulty a reminiscence of Vanni Fucci in the man who is stretching his doubled fists, "with the thumbs thrust out," towards heaven and blaspheming the while (*Inferno* 25, 1, etc.). Lastly, Minos sits in the foreground, twisting his tail around him, and hands over the damned to their tormentors.

More direct still is the connection with Dante in the paintings of the plinths under the great frescoes, where there are in the brilliant arabesques, among other things, an excellent portrait of Dante with his open book, and eleven scenes from the *Purgatorio*. The pictures are painted in grey on the wall, each scene occupying a medallion inside the ornamentation. They are really illustrations to the first eleven cantos of the *Purgatorio*; and even if the execution of the plinth paintings is to be ascribed to the hands of pupils for the most part, as Vischer supposes, yet we must recognise in the invention and composition the original work of the master. All the medallions have been reproduced by F. X. Kraus in colotype—*Purgatorio*, Canto 5, also in Fumi's "*Il Duomo d'Orvieto*"; and Canto 2, by Bassermann, Plate 56. Lippmann considers it probable that Signorelli borrowed hints from Botticelli, but we find no trace of any relation of this kind



when we compare the works of the two artists; it seems rather that Signorelli was perfectly independent. In the very figure of Virgil the fundamental difference is perceptible: in Botticelli bearded and in mantle and peaked crown, he appears here like a Roman poet, in antique dress, beardless, shoeless, with a laurel chaplet on his brow. It is the conception of the Cinquecento which asserts itself there also. Signorelli's greatest strength is seen here, as elsewhere, in the excellent treatment of the nude form; for the rest, everybody will certainly show preference for Botticelli's Dante illustration. On such a small scale *al fresco*, the pictures of Signorelli could not give their best effects, and the execution by the hands of pupils, as well as the in part bad preservation of the pictures, considerably diminish their impressiveness. But we must bear in mind that the two masters sought to project the artistic treasures of the "Divine Comedy" on two opposed planes. Painting and drawing also differentiate themselves here. Signorelli's grey cameos are not an end in themselves, they serve for the ornamental accompaniment and suggestive explanation of the great wall paintings, in which the artistic centre of gravity of the whole lies. But above all the new spirit of the Cinquecento gives documentary evidence of itself in this, that the artist, while brilliantly controlling the form and space, was a free independently creating *personality*, as he was in that classical golden age which it was the intention to reanimate.



## CHAPTER III.

MICHAEL ANGELO.



SIGNORELLI'S frescoes are the immediate stepping-stone to the works of the greatest genius of the Italian Renaissance, Michael Angelo; for it is exceedingly probable that the latter received his most enduring artistic impressions in the cathedral at Orvieto, and indeed drank immediate inspiration from the work of Signorelli.

Michael Angelo is so intimately connected with Dante and his poetry that we can scarcely mention the artist's name without mentally reverting to that of the poet; and in every biography of Michael Angelo his relation to Dante, as being an essential element of his mental life, is therefore treated in detail. Mentally allied as he was to his great countryman, whose works he read from his earliest years, he had outwardly too a fate like his to experience—viz., to be banished from his native city, which owed to him its immortal fame. Perhaps it was the bitter thought of his own fate which prompted him to write the two sonnets on Dante, which are brimful of just anger against a foolish people. I subjoin both of them in the translation of Hazlitt, although they have often enough been printed elsewhere; for nothing can give us a better idea of the deep inner connection of these two great men than the glowing words of Michael Angelo himself:

### I.

“He from the world into the blind abyss  
Descended, and beheld the realms of woe;  
Then to the seat of everlasting bliss,  
And God's own throne, led by his thought sublime,  
Alive he soared, and to our nether clime  
Bringing a steady light, to us below

Revealed the secrets of eternity.  
Ill did his thankless countrymen repay  
The fine desire ; that which the good and great  
So often from the insensate many meet,  
That evil guerdon did our Dante find.  
But gladly would I, to be such as he,  
For his hard exile and calamity  
Forego the happiest fortunes of mankind."

## II.

"How shall we speak of him, for our blind eyes  
Are all unequal to his dazzling rays?  
Easier it is to blame his enemies  
Than for the tongue to tell his highest praise.  
For us did he explore the realms of woe;  
And at his coming did high heaven expand  
Hers lofty gates, to whom his native land  
Refused to open hers. Yet shalt thou know,  
Ungrateful city, in thine own despite,  
That thou hast fostered best thy Dante's fame;  
For virtue when oppressed appears more bright,  
And brighter therefore shall his glory be,  
Suffering of all mankind most wrongfully,  
Since in the world there lives no greater name."

Michael Angelo also expressed his veneration for the poet when he, along with the most prominent men of the city, subscribed to a petition which was sent in October 1519 to the Pope for permission to fetch back to Florence the ashes of Dante. Not only does he join in the request like the others, but he offers his services then and there to raise "to the divine poet a memorial worthy of him in the most honourable place in the town," if the transference was permitted. The memorable passage, which is printed in Gori's "Notes to *Condivi*," runs in the original as follows: "Jo Michelagnuolo schultore il medesimo a Vostra Santità supplicho, offerendomi al divin poetà fare la sepultura sua chondecente e in loco onorevole in questa città." The request was not granted, and Dante's remains rest still in Ravenna, under the monument raised by Pietro Lombardi's hand.

How widespread the fame of Michael Angelo was as a

connoisseur of Dante we may see from the conversations of the year 1545 written down by Donato Gianotti, where Michael Angelo is introduced as one of the speakers, and aids in the solution of difficult questions of the time in the "Divine Comedy" with great ingenuity. The notes are certainly not authentic, and the favourite form of dialogue was chosen rather with the view of infusing into the style greater vivacity. But the fact that Gianotti introduces Michael Angelo as the chief speaker is certainly characteristic, and we may, with Carrière, look confidently for many of his actual thoughts in these conversations.

It was impossible that such a relationship in spirit could remain without effect on Michael Angelo's creations. The connection is doubtless not always patent. Like Signorelli, Michael Angelo was really filled with the poet's spirit without at the same time slavishly following him; like him, he was a free and independent personality, and created works out of the depths of his own being which breathe the powerful life of the Comedy and yet stand alongside it in independence. In this sense the grand cycle of thoughts and forms which the master created on the roof of the Sixtine Chapel is, above all, thoroughly penetrated by the spirit of Dante. But we have also from his hand direct representations of figures and scenes of the "Divine Comedy." That relievo indeed which used to be pointed out in the Palazzo della Gherardesca in Florence as the work of Michael Angelo is now denied him, and ascribed to Pierino da Vinci or to Tribolo. Hunger in the guise of a hideous woman hovers over Count Ugolino, and points out to him his three dying sons—a reminiscence of the thirty-third canto of the *Inferno* (reproduced in Lord Vernon's edition of Dante, London, 1858-65; also in Zobi, "Considerazioni sopra la catastrofe del Conte Ugolino," and in Vol. III. of the "Elogi degli uomini illustri Toscani," Florence, 1771; also in Landon, "Vie et œuvres des peintres les plus célèbres," Paris, 1803, Vol. II., Plate 20;—as the work of Michael Angelo). The two female figures on the tomb of

Julius II., which at present stand on the two sides of Moses in S. Pietro in Vincoli, are, however, the work of Michael Angelo. Condivi has already testified that they were inspired by Dante; he says: "On the right—*i.e.*, on the spectator's left—of the statue of Moses, under a niche, is the one figure which represents the Life of Contemplation—a woman of more than normal growth, but of rare beauty; with bended knee she stands, not on the ground, but on a socle, her face and hands turned upwards towards heaven, so that it appears as if love breathed out of every part of her form. On the other side, on Moses' left, is the Life of Action, with a mirror in her right hand, in which she is attentively examining herself, by which we are to learn that our actions ought to be performed only after mature consideration; in her left hand she holds a garland of flowers. In this Michael Angelo has followed Dante, whom he always deeply studied, and who pretends, in his *Purgatorio*, to have met Countess Matilda, whom he takes to represent Active Life in a flowery meadow." But not only the flowers are taken from the "*Divine Comedy*," both figures are formed quite in Dante's manner; they are Leah and Rachel, the symbols of active and contemplative life, as they are described in the twenty-seventh canto of the *Purgatorio*.

Quite in the spirit of Dante, Michael Angelo set about painting the Last Judgment in the Sixtine Chapel, in the years between 1535 and 1541 (Bassermann, Plate 60). Christ, a nude mighty hero, stands as world Judge amid the saved. Strong in body, expression, and mien, beardless, with wavy hair, He gazes in wrath on the host of the damned; He has raised His right arm threateningly, as if about to hurl down His avenging bolts. That is not the Christ of ordinary tradition; that is the Christ whom Dante calls "*almighty Jupiter*," "*sommo Giove*" (*Purgatorio* 6, 118). Frightful avenging spirits hurl the godless down to hell. They are the same demons as in Signorelli; in fact, one figure, which is riding on the back of a flying devil, seems to be directly

borrowed from the fresco at Orvieto. Below, one can see the ferryboat of Charon, from which the damned are thronging in masses. The sombre ferryman of the nether world himself is faithfully depicted after Dante, as he beats with his oar every one who hesitates (*Inferno* 3, 111). This splendid motive had been almost universally allowed to pass unnoticed by artists previously. Most of the manuscripts present Charon simply as a rowing devil; and even in the rare cases where there was a suggestion of the beating with the oar, this is so stiffly and awkwardly done that one cannot really call them worthy representations of Dante's Charon as yet. Michael Angelo was the first to give him classical form, and all later men followed him in this.\* In the right-hand corner of the picture Minos, the judge of the lower world, takes the sinners into custody. He too is depicted faithfully to Dante's description; he winds his tail round his body a certain number of times to denote the circle into which he desires the soul to be cast in each case (*Inferno* 5, 4-12).

If we find several of the personages of Dante receiving their most perfect form from Michael Angelo, we must regret the more profoundly that a copy of the "*Divine Comedy*," illustrated by his hand, and herewith perhaps the most profound and magnificent embodiment of the thoughts of the poet, has disappeared without leaving a trace. Our knowledge of its existence is derived from Bottari, who gives in his edition of Vasari a description of its loss. Bottari was in a position to be well informed, for the last possessor of the invaluable work, the sculptor Antonio Montauti, died about 1740—*i.e.*, at a time when Bottari was fifty-one years old. His description therefore deserves implicit belief.† It

\* As an example of this, Angelo Allori's cartoon, "Christ in the Entrance to Hell," in the Uffizi at Florence, may serve. In it we see Michael Angelo's Charon faithfully copied.

† F. X. Kraus, in his *Dante*, however, throws doubt on it. He observes that the testimony of the sometime fortunate possessor of the volume is not sufficient—a remark which deserves consideration, especially as the older collectors were often not too particular in ascribing their treasures to famous artists.

runs as follows: "E quanto egli (Michelangelo) ne fosse studioso (di Dante), si vedrebbe da un suo Dante col commento del Landino della prima stampa, che è in foglio e in carta grossa, e con un margine largo un mezzo palmo, e forse più. Su questi margini il Bonarroti aveva disegnato in penna tutto quello, che si contiene nella poesia di Dante; perlochè v'era un numero innumerabile di nudi eccellentissimi, e in attitudini maravigliose. Questo libro venne alle mani d'Antonio Montauti. . . . E comechè il Montauti era di professione scultore di molta abilità, faceva una grande stima di questo volume. Ma avendo trovato impiego d'architetto soprastante nella fabbrica di S. Pietro, gli convenne piantare il suo domicilio qui in Roma, onde fece venire per mare un suo allievo con tutti i suoi marmi, e bronzi, e studj, e altri suoi arnesi, abbandonando la città di Firenze. Nelle casse delle sue robe fece riporre con molta gelosia questo libro; ma la barca, su cui erano caricate, fece naufragio tra Livorno e Civita vecchia, e vi affogò il suo giovane, e tutte le sue robe, e con esse si fece perdita lagrimevole di questo preziosissimo volume, che da se solo bastava a decorare la libreria di qualsivoglia gran Monarca."

However much we may bemoan this irreparable loss, the very fact that we possess such a circumstantial account of it constitutes an item of some value in this connection. The master who uses so freely and grandly the contents of the poem in his great paintings is here seen taking up the pen of the true illustrator and following all the descriptions of the poem, of which in the frescoes he merely wished to reproduce the spiritual quintessence. "Il Bonarroti aveva disegnato in penna tutto quello, che si contiene nella poesia di Dante"; had we not known long since that monumental painting and illustration are governed by different laws, the example of Michael Angelo would have taught us.

Compared with Signorelli and Michael Angelo, the other illustrations of Dante in the sixteenth century are very inferior. Book painting was killed by the printed editions, and artists had therefore much fewer opportunities to try their hand at

the Comedy. But still its penetrating influence was felt by the painters; and we hear over and over again, in the case of the best of them, that they had studied Dante's work and were thoroughly acquainted with it. Cases in point are those of the two artists who share with Michael Angelo the reputation of being the greatest masters of Italian art—Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci.

Raphael had the greatest veneration for the poet—in fact, being deeply struck by his fundamental importance in connection with the profoundest problems of society in his time, he introduced his likeness into two pictures of the “Camera della Segnatura,” as a poet upon Parnassus with Homer and Virgil, as a theologian in the “Disputa,” side by side with Savonarola. It is also well known that he represented Theology there in the form of Beatrice, with veil and chaplet, and clothed her in the symbolical colours of Beatrice—green and red. The small S. Michael in the Louvre, painted about 1504 for Duke Guidobaldo da Urbino (Gutbier, Raffael-Werk, Pictures, No. 75), presents undoubtedly a reminiscence of Dante. In the foreground the artist has represented the city of wrath in flames. In front on the left sinners wander about wearing leaden cowls; on the right are others, surrounded and tormented by snakes. These are the sycophants and thieves from the twenty-third and twenty-fourth cantos of the *Inferno*. A connection with Cesar Borgia is surmised here, because the latter had treacherously invaded the Duchy of Urbino. The victory of the archangel over Satan would then require to be understood as symbolic of the triumph of the good and righteous over the wicked and unrighteous.

Leonardo was likewise a great reverer of Dante and a considerable connoisseur of his works, as an anecdote in the anonymous “Breve vita di Leonardo da Vinci” (communicated by Milanese to the Archivio storico, Ser. III., Vol. 16, p. 29) proves. Before the Palazza Spini talented men were disputing over some individual lines of Dante, and appealed to Leonardo, who was passing at the time, to interpret a difficult passage.



He, however, referred them to Michael Angelo, who by chance was coming the same way. It is very conceivable, I must say, that Leonardo's sharp spirit approached Dante more from the intellectual side than from the purely artistic side; we possess, at least, no illustrations to the "Divine Comedy" from his hand. Thus, if we neglect the printed editions, there are only two artists of the Cinquecento who are really illustrators of the poem; of these two, one is already approaching the period of decline, and the other belongs to another land and nation.





## CHAPTER IV.

THE DRAWINGS OF FEDERIGO ZUCCARO AND OF  
GIOVANNI STRADANO.

“DANTE historiato da Federigo Zuccaro” is the title of a huge oblong folio volume which is preserved in the Collection of Drawings at the Uffizi in Florence. Even in the cupola frescoes of the Florentine Cathedral, begun by Vasari, which he carried on and brought to an end, Zuccaro is in accord with Dante. The Cerberus and the Prince of Hell are depicted, following the poet’s words. From 1586 till 1588 Zuccaro attempted to illustrate the “Divine Comedy.” He was at that time in Madrid, whither Philip II. had called him; and several of his pages bear on the reverse the particular notice that they were finished in the Escorial. On the reverse of the piece to Purgatorio 31 is written in Zuccaro’s hand, “dicembre 1587 nell’ Escuriale in Spagna”; likewise in Paradiso 1: “Addi 16. Marzo 1588, nell’ Escuriale in Spagna.” These notes, however, cannot now be seen, as the drawings have been mounted for the sake of better preservation. There are in all eighty-seven pages, executed with the most skilled and brilliant technique: sometimes they are drawn merely with sanguine; sometimes they have red figures in a black landscape or with an architectural setting; while others are sketched in sepia or are only drawn in with the pen. Although Lippmann, in the text to his Botticelli publication (p. 12), takes for granted that Zuccaro must have known and used the drawings of Botticelli, there is no confirmation of this if

we closely compare the works of both. Zuccaro's conception, on the contrary, is completely in harmony with his time and tendency. Comparison is all the easier since Bassermann has reproduced several illustrations. He gives on Plates 61-4 the scenes to Inferno 3 and 5 and to Purgatorio 10 and 29. I am glad to be able to reproduce here the illustration to Inferno 4. While Botticelli is principally concerned with the figures, and, in fact, in most cases only indicates scenery with a light and extremely simple touch, Zuccaro treats the environment with great care; he gives landscapes in a masterly fashion, especially trees and large quaint architectural pieces, which have often a very disturbing effect. The door of Hell is, in his representation, a huge ornamented erection, fantastically adorned with bones, skulls, and complete skeletons; and his Chariot of the Church is a masterpiece of the carpenter's art. He is quite familiar with the antique; his heroes and poets appear in antique accoutrements and habits,—Virgil wears the toga and a garland of laurel. The damned are not tormented and guarded by devils of the mediæval description, as in Botticelli, but by demons of the modern kind, such as Signorelli and Michael Angelo had created—in fact, the figure of Charon brandishing his oar is doubtless borrowed from the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo. Who, in the face of such fundamental differences, would dare hold to the few and unessential conformities, which are partly founded on the text itself and partly are to be accounted for by the fact that many of the personages of the divine poem had already received at the hands of the miniaturists the forms of fixed and well-known types? Too much weight must not be laid on the figure of Satan specially; the horned and winged ruler in the land of wailing who gobbles up the damned with his triple jaws was even before the time of Dante a popular personality, and Zuccaro did not require to be acquainted with the drawings of Botticelli to depict him as he has done. Indeed, Cornelius Galle about the same time engraved, after a drawing by L. Cigoli, a plate which represents Satan in

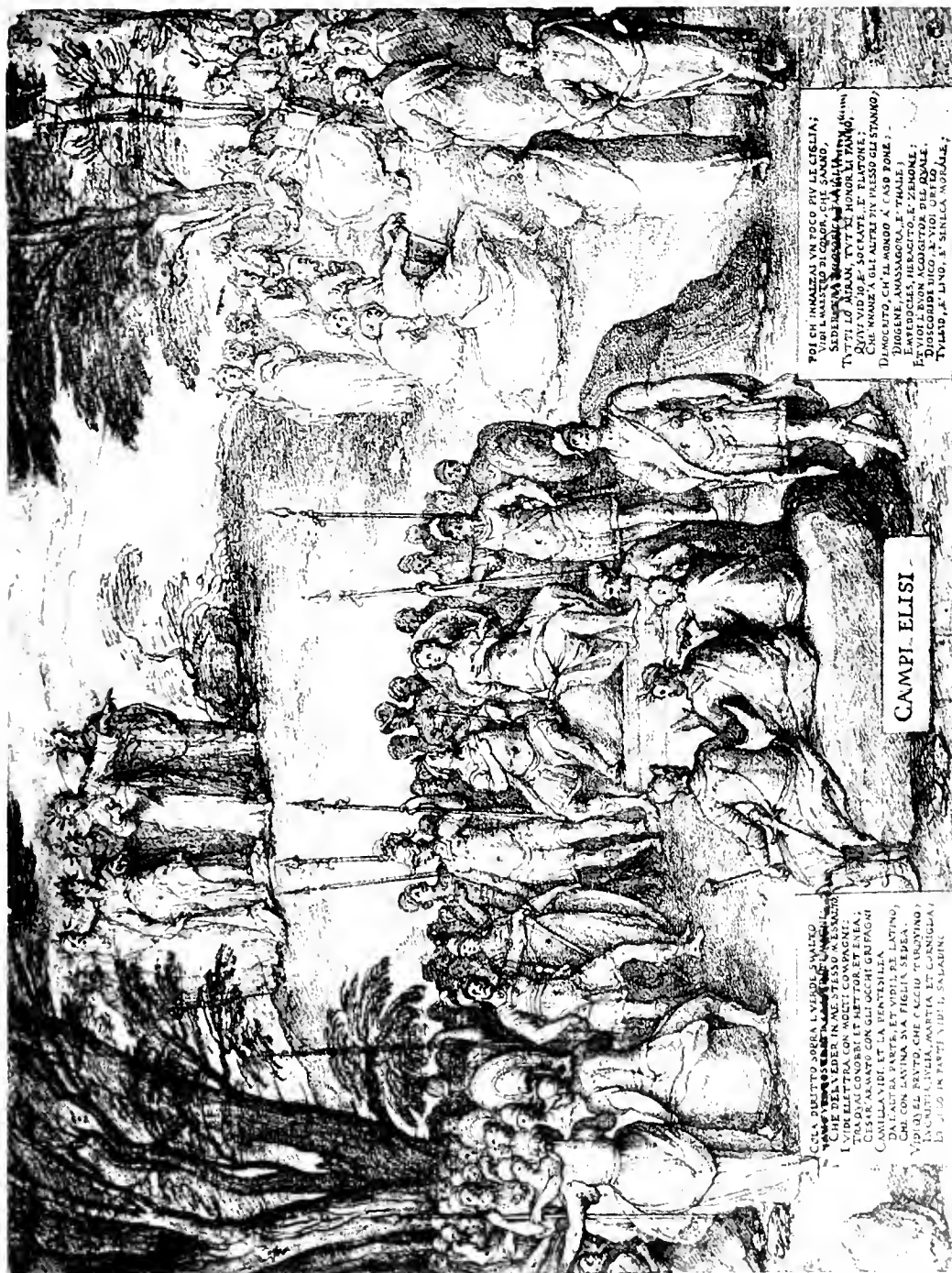
quite the same way, certainly without having seen the work of Botticelli.\*

The technical perfection of the illustrations of Zuccaro must not blind us, however, to the great defects which they contain. His obtrusive straining after approximation to the antique, his too correct composition and too conscious grouping, the external elegance of the forms which degenerates into affectation, and lastly the bombastic architecture and landscape,—all these qualities, which characterise the entire work of Zuccaro, and which justify us in reckoning him among the mannerists, assert themselves here too. In consequence of this, although we cannot gainsay him the reputation of a talented and masterly artist, we are glad to turn away from him and recall the simpler creations of Sandro Botticelli, his elder by about a whole century.

At the same time as Zuccaro, another artist was busy in Italy with the illustration of the "Divine Comedy." To be sure he was not a born Italian. Hans van der Straet was born in Bruges, and was therefore a thorough Fleming. But as an artist he made Italy his home, and attached himself entirely to the pupils and imitators of Michael Angelo. He worked along with Vasari, who had a high opinion of him, and associated himself so completely with Italian art that he may be reckoned for all practical purposes as an Italian artist. Vasari himself introduced him into the Florentine Academy, and says of him, "*Mostra di essere valent' uomo, e d'aver bene appreso la maniera italiana.*" His name, Hans van der Straet, he soon Italianised or Latinised; and he calls himself sometimes Giovanni della Strada, sometimes Stradano, and sometimes Stradanus or Stratensis. He died November 2nd, 1605, in Florence.

Perhaps it was his unlimited admiration for Michael Angelo which suggested to him the thought that he might illustrate

\* Lucifer: L. Cigoli Florent. figuravit. Cornelius Galle sculpsit. Phls. Galle excudit. The plate has numerous notes of explanation, and several times represents the figures of the poets on a small scale.



POI CH' INNAZZAI VN POCO PIV LE CIGLIA;  
VIRI L'AMAZZO DI COLOR, CHE SANNO,  
SEDI ME VVA SAGGIACIA LA RALTA' DI  
TU' TI LO ATRAI, TUTT' EL MOND' EL TANO,  
CHE ANNE A GLI AITRI TIV PESSO GLI STANNO,  
DINOCCUTO, CH' EL MOND' A' CASO RONE.  
DIIGENE, AMASSAGUA, E' 'THALLE  
L'ESUDUCLES, HERAGITO, E' ZENONE;  
FEDERICO, IL MOND' DI EDOLE,  
DISCORDIA LICO, A' VIVO MORALE,  
TYLLO, E' LIND, E' SINCA MORALE;

CAMPI ELISI.

CELA DUTTO DORA L'VIGOR SVALTO  
VANO TROVARE E' LA VITA L'VIGOR  
CHE DE VEDER IN ME STESSO A' ESACIO  
I TROVARE E' LA VITA L'VIGOR  
TAVOGLIO CORRE E' METTOR E' ENA;  
CISAR AMATO CON GLI OCCHI GRIPACI  
CAMILIAVIDE E' LA PENTESTELA  
CAMILIAVIDE E' LA PENTESTELA  
CON GLI OCCHI GRIPACI  
VIGOR EL PRATO, CHE CAGGIO TAVOGLIO  
VIGOR EL PRATO, CHE CAGGIO TAVOGLIO  
VIGOR EL PRATO, CHE CAGGIO TAVOGLIO  
VIGOR EL PRATO, CHE CAGGIO TAVOGLIO

Federigo Zuccaro.

17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.



his master's favourite poet Dante. In 1587-88 he executed the drawings, which are now preserved in the Biblioteca Laurenziana. They are to be found in a volume of *Miscellanies*, No. 75 of the *Codici Mediceo-Palatini*, and have appeared complete (Unwin, London, 1892) in collotype, with an introductory essay by the director of the Laurenziana, Guido Biagi. Kraus, at figs. 63 and 64, reproduces the scenes to *Inferno* 1 and 7.

The pictures are sketched and executed in *chiaroscuro*. Several synoptical pages make up the beginning, explanatory sketches "*de situ, forma et misura Inferni*"; then follow the illustrations themselves. The first twenty-eight representations belong without doubt to Stradano, for the pages are marked in full: "*IO. STRADANVS FLANDER INVENTOR FLORENTIAE*," and the date 1587 or 1588. The first four compositions illustrate the beginning of the *Purgatorio*; then follow twenty-four pages to the *Inferno*.

More frequently even than Zuccaro does Stradano appear to have stuck to the older types; but still both his technique and his conception are fully in accordance with the sixteenth century. The poets wear classical costume and laurel wreaths; the old-world personages are not devils, but demons; and Charon is formed on the pattern in Michael Angelo's *Last Judgment*. In the figures of the devils indeed the Fleming often displays his nationality; especially the Devil, who, in the ninth *bolgia*, lacerates the sinners with a sword, has a fantastic frog-form such as was alien to the spirit of Italian art, and is more suggestive of the conception of a Bosch than of Signorelli or Michael Angelo.

These twenty-eight illustrations are followed by some compositions to the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, which, however, Bandini, in the catalogue of the Laurenziana, has already denied to be by Stradano. These are at first two pencil sketches (pp. 141 and 143), representing the skiff with the angel who conducts the souls to the Mount of Purification. These two sketches might at all events be still assigned to

Stradano. On pages 145-59 there are again plans and outlines. Lastly, twelve pages to the Paradiso, portrayed very roughly in blue and white. These latter without doubt are not Stradano's.

Stradano also sometimes got inspiration from the "Divine Comedy" for other artistic representations, and two of these have been engraved. The first of these pictures is called "Allegory on Dante." In the centre is seen the bust of the poet, with cap and laurel chaplet, half in profile, in a medallion; in his hand he holds his work. Over above this a medallion contains the head of Beatrice, with chaplet and veil. It is circumscribed with "Portinaria Beatrix." Beneath is a third medallion, with Virgil and Statius. In the top left-hand corner we can see the Rose of Heaven, encircled by hovering angels; in the right-hand top corner the celestial spheres in the form of concentric circles studded with constellations. Underneath, on the left, Hell is drawn as a subterranean crater; while notes specify on every circle what sin is there atoned for. The same is the case in the representation of Purgatorio as a mount with terrace-like shelves, which occupies the right-hand bottom corner. The whole idea of the reproduction of the likeness of Dante in connection with the illustration of his three domains is to some extent suggestive of the picture of Domenico di Michelino in the cathedral at Florence. The page is framed by a border of angels' heads and grimacing devils; it is signed with the names of the draughtsman and the engraver: "Ioan. Stradanus invent.—C. Galle excud." The second print was prepared from Stradano's sketch by Theodore Galle; it represents Ugolino languishing to death with his three sons in the Tower of Starvation, from Dante's description (*Inferno* 33).

Stradano's method of illustrating Dante is excessively interesting for the sake of comparison with those few northern miniaturists who applied themselves to the task in the fifteenth century. They copied slavishly the prototypes which the Venetian wood-cuts contained; and the only one among them



who did otherwise simply rendered Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise in accordance with his native conception. The Fleming of the sixteenth century has become an Italian; he tries to repress with all his might his own peculiarities, although they do show themselves occasionally, and he strives to see with the eyes of the grand Italian masters. The time was coming when northern artists were to enrich the domain of Dante illustration with new features which sprang from their inner selves.





## CHAPTER V.

### THE WOOD-CUT EDITIONS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

THE great variety which at one time had been offered by the illustrated manuscripts has now vanished, and the general view presented by the activity of the Dante illustrators in the Cinquecento is decidedly clearer and simpler than that in previous centuries. Two great picture cycles, two complete series of drawings, owe their inspiration to the "Divine Comedy." In connection with the adornment of copies of the poem itself, however, the field has been kept by the reproductive art of the wood-cut alone. This at first introduces nothing new, for, as already mentioned, the Venetian wood-cut illustrations of the Quattrocento enjoyed still great popularity, although they belonged to a past age. So great was the general approbation of them that there was no immediate attempt made towards the drawing and engraving of a new Dante illustration in keeping with the spirit of the age; the work was rather carried on in the old ruts.

The first illustrated edition of the Cinquecento, which appeared 1506 in Florence from the hand of Filippo di Giunta, has indeed only one real pictorial representation—viz., a wood-cut, which presents Dante and the three beasts in the wood. At the end there are certainly added designs "de sito et forma dell' Inferno," but these cannot put forward any claim to the name of illustrations.

The following edition, on the contrary, "impressa in Venetia per Bartholomeo de Zanni da Portese. Del M.D.VII. Adi. XVII. de zugno," conforms exactly, even in the details, to

the edition of Benali, Venice, 1491. Only the title-pages to the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso* are slightly different from what they are there. As for the engraving, these copies are by no means so fine as their originals.

Likewise exactly formed after Benali's hundred illustrations are the wood-cuts of the Dante edition brought out by "Jacob de Burgofranco paveſe. Adi. 23 di Gennaro 1529." This edition is distinguished from the others by a full-page portrait in profile of the poet with cap and laurel chaplet, which is placed at the beginning.

An attempt to transform the old editions was made by Bernardino Stagnino di Trino di Monferra in 1512. His Dante, which was re-issued in 1516 and 1520 by himself, and in 1536 by Giovanni Giolito, presents new illustrations. If, however, we regard the work more closely, we shall see throughout very clearly his dependence on the earlier editions; and besides, the pictures are drawn and cut so coarsely that their artistic worth must be pronounced extremely small. Kraus, fig. 55, reproduces the wood-cut to *Inferno* 6.

If we now search for a really modern edition of the sixteenth century, in contrast to all these editions which have still their roots actually in the *Quattrocento*, we find only one, "*La Comedia di Dante Alighieri, con la nova esposizione di Alessandro Vellutello . . . Impressa in Vinegia per Francesco Marcolini ad instantia di Alessandro Vellutello del mese di Gugno l'anno MDXLIII.*" This edition is related to those of the *Quattrocento* in much the same way as the drawings of Zuccaro are to those of Botticelli; a new treatment of form and a new conception of the whole assert themselves in it. Here too the chief difference lies in the conception of the antique. The poets wear the antique costume and laurel wreaths; Charon and Phlegias are demons of modern form; Cerberus is a three-headed dog, not a devil, etc., etc. Even if old types are reproduced, they are dressed up in the style of the *Cinquecento*. This is especially striking in the full-page title pictures of the three parts, which in

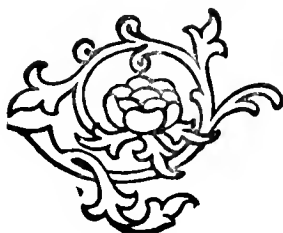
composition correspond with the edition of Benali (1491), but are entirely changed in everything which concerns the individual forms. Dante has always a full beard in these pictures.

One great defect of these illustrations, however, is that throughout the draughtsman always protrudes his endeavour to describe the separate circles and divisions with mathematical exactness. Instead of an artistic description of the contents, they consequently give a commentary in the form of a plan "*de situ et misura*" of the domains of the poet. There is no presentation of freshly detached scenes, but we find designs and sections in which the figures are of secondary import, and which are frequently explained by notes. In the *Paradiso* a bright planet is usually represented, inside which Dante, Beatrice, and the other individuals engaged in conversation stand. Kraus gives, at fig. 56, the wood-cut to *Purgatorio* 7.

In spite of all defects, these illustrations, too, served in their turn as prototypes for several editions, the first of which was published in 1564 in Venice, by Giovambattista Marchio Sessa e fratelli, and is known to the book collector by the portrait it contains of Dante "*al gran naso*." In 1578 and 1596 it was re-issued by the same publisher. In other editions only the three title-pages to the *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* are copied from the 1544 edition of Marcolini. In this place we must reckon four prints which Guglielmo Rovillio brought out in Lyons in 1551, 1552, 1571, and 1575. The three title-pages are diminished and by no means improved imitations of the Venetian prototype. An edition published in Venice in 1554 by Giovann' Antonio Morando is again a reprint of Rovillio's. These editions thus afford us at the same time an interesting glance at the relations which were called forth by the complete want of copyright protection in the literary and artistic worlds of that time.

In conclusion, an edition of the year 1555, "*In Vinegia appresso Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari, et fratelli*," is rather peculiar. Printed in miniature form, it is elegantly decorated

with initials and tailpieces, while the twelve pictorial representations (*Inferno* 1, 3, 34; *Purgatorio* 1, 2, 11, 15, 31; *Paradiso* 1, 3, 21, 33) are quite secondary. They are, besides, of very small size, and almost crushed out by heavy cartouches in late Renaissance style, so that they appear to be quite subordinate to the book ornamentation. If at first sight this book receives thereby an appearance different from that which previous printed editions offered, yet on closer examination it is evident that it owes much to the wood-cuts of the 1544 edition. Other Venetian editions, such as that of Aldus (1515) and that of Pietro da Fino (1568) have in general only diagrammatic representations of the three domains; and thus one cannot help expressing a feeling of disappointment in looking through the illustrated Dante editions of the Cinquecento.





## CHAPTER VI.

### DANTE AND THE ART OF THE "EPIGONI."

"**E**XAMINE Italian art and you will find that decline begins wherever the painters cease to carry about Dante within them." This expression of Cornelius, which Grimm quotes in his "Michael Angelo," is certainly very one-sided and in many respects unjust; but from his point of view it must appear to us perfectly intelligible. His art was an abstract art, an art of thought, and he applied his standard with the right of a genius to all others. The historian of art ought not to follow him in this respect; but the converse of the proposition remains a fact: after Italian art had seen its best days, and had fallen a victim to empty technique on the one hand and to barren eclecticism on the other, artists ceased almost entirely to occupy themselves with the "Divine Comedy." The fact also that a whole period of art looked askance at this subject is of great iconographical interest. Certainly the academicians of Bologna and the Neapolitans of the seventeenth century had great merits which we must not under-estimate; they could especially paint far better than Cornelius and his school. But it was not their affair to follow up the thoughts of a poet whose riddles were so hard to solve. Their common feature was that they tried to turn to account the ideas they had inherited without trouble, and to expand them by their abundant skill into gorgeous and decorative, though not always conscientious, illustration. They did not trouble themselves, however, with the solution of problems and with brooding over the

profoundest questions of the human mind. The art of a Fa Presto could not work its way through hell and purgatory up to paradise. Those solitary individuals who at that time were seeking to make new tracks for Italian art—*i.e.* the naturalists in the wake of Caravaggio—were not ordained to be interpreters of Dante from the nature of the case, because an art whose sole intention is a keen comprehension of the world as it is will never meddle in this way with Dante, however much the poet may have enthralled the masters of the art of fancy from his own day to this. In Holland, too, where the artistic centre of gravity of the seventeenth century was situated, Dante was then not known; and besides this, the homely, intimate, and thoroughly realistic art of the Protestant Dutchmen would have been no soil for him. It was otherwise in Flanders; there was there alive a master who would have found, perhaps, new powerful embodiments of the ideas of Dante if his interest had been turned to the "Divine Comedy"—Peter Paul Rubens. One might almost say in regard to his Fall of the Damned that he has illustrated Dante unconsciously.

If we then regard the sum total we find that the art of the seventeenth century produced scarcely anything in the department of Dante illustration. Nothing gives such a striking confirmation of this as the circumstance that during the whole century not one illustrated edition of the "Divine Comedy" appeared! The only printed work of the seventeenth century which deserves mention here is a very large four-page copper-plate, engraved by Callot from the drawing of Bernardo Pocetti, and published in 1612 with a dedication to Grand Duke Cosimo I., of Tuscany (described in Meaume, Jacques Callot, Vol. I., No. 153). Although the print is cited oftenest by the name "*Il corso della vita dell' uomo, ovvero l' Inferno, il Purgatorio, il Paradiso, Comento pittorico della Divina Commedia,*" it is really only to be ranked among the illustrations to the Inferno; for nearly the whole space is occupied by the Inferno,

while the Purgatorio is suggested only in the upper left-hand corner by a hole in the rock with souls in flames, and the Paradiso in the right-hand top corner by a host of the elect, whom Christ is leading up to heaven with the banner of victory. Hell itself was to be reproduced quite conformably to Dante's conception, as Pocetti also, in his accompanying words "a' lettori," assures us. Despite this, the connection with Dante is not very close. Hell consists of concentric rings, the centre of which is the typical Lucifer, and the different sections are populated by sinners of every sort, who are tormented by demons. But the artist has kept only superficially to the poet's words; he often follows his own fancy, and invents hideous tortures which we should seek for in vain in Dante. The picture, then, is not at all what Pocetti called it—viz., "an artistic commentary"; for it is neither artistic nor an exact commentary on the poem. The inner acquaintance with Dante, which the oldest illustrators of the Comedy had not yet obtained, was possessed no longer by the later artists.

Like an oasis in the desert rises a work of this period, a work which cannot at least be gainsaid the charm of a pleasing grace in form and colour, and which for long enjoyed an exaggerated fame—namely, the last series of pictures of the Vatican manuscript Urb. 365, the older miniatures of which have been already discussed above.

The last Duke of Urbino finally had the decoration of the handsome manuscript completed. The identity of the artist who executed the commission is a much debated point, and in spite of all affirmations to the contrary the work is even to-day mostly ascribed to Giulio Clovio (1498–1578), the "*piccolo e nuovo Michelagnolo*," as Vasari calls him enthusiastically. G. Cozza-Luzzi, who published in 1893 the collected miniatures of the Paradiso, still decidedly adheres to this view, and alleges as proof positive the drawings and sketches which he discovered in a volume of miscellanies in the Vatican, and which bear many notes in the artist's handwriting. We are certainly most



deeply indebted to him for this discovery and for his brilliant publication, the stock of which unfortunately suffered total destruction by fire. But that Clovio was the artist he has not proved; for when he affirms that the characters upon the sketches correspond with those of Clovio, and alleges in proof the letters and the will of the master, I would beg to say against this that M. Cozza-Luzi examined these documents, not from a personal sight of them, but only in the printing,\* to which he referred me when I was making inquiries with him concerning the originals. The resemblance also of the miniatures with those of the famous "Accounts of the lives of the Dukes of Urbino," in the Vatican, is taken as a proof, while this merely shows that both manuscripts were illustrated by the same artist, not that Clovio was the artist. The name Clovio became in Italy the collective term for finely executed miniatures of later art; and scientific criticism must be exceedingly cautious in approaching such works as are ascribed to him by tradition. Let us then consider the pictures themselves next. In those illustrations which had to fill up lacunæ left by his predecessor (*Purgatorio* 26 and 27), the later artist adapted himself as well as he could to the style of the earlier; he regarded the work in general as a continuation, and introduced into the frontispiece of the *Paradiso* the dedication to the long deceased Federigo and the Order of the Garter. It is only in the later pictures that he shows himself quite in his own colours. Great technical lightness and elegance, a certain refinement, much skill in composition must be acknowledged him; but he wants force and depth, and his effects are really mawkish and hollow alongside the energetic pages of his predecessor. The elegance appears, in the long run, affected, the fine fall of the garments too elaborate, the glittering gayness of colour monotonous and

\* Ronchini in "*Memorie Storiche Modena e Parma*," III., p. 259; and Bertolotti, "*Atti per la Storia di Emilia*," VII., P. II., 263. Bradley gives in his "*Life of Clovio*" a facsimile of the inscription; the handwriting does not correspond with the notes on the drawings.

without expression. The older miniatures could well be imagined for the most part as very excellently executed paintings; the later would decorate a porcelain plate (Bassermann reproduces Purgatorio 33 and Paradiso 13 on Plate 50, and Paradiso 11 on Plate 49; Beissel ("Vaticanische Miniaturen") gives Paradiso 1. Kraus (figs. 34, 38, and 39) reproduces the frontispiece of the Paradiso, and Purgatorio 29 and 31. Silvestre ("Paléographie universelle," Plate 3) has a good coloured reproduction of Paradiso 3).

The best pictures of the series are those at the end of the Purgatorio, but especially the Adoration and Coronation of Mary in the thirty-second canto of the Paradiso. The Madonna is hovering aloft, her wide mantle floating around her, in a halo of beams; beneath kneel Dante, S. Bernard, and an angel, while two youthful angels hold the crown above the head of the Queen of Heaven. The remaining miniatures of the Paradiso present the respective planet mostly as a radiant golden or silver star; the scene goes on in the interior of the star or on the vault of heaven, considered as a sphere, so that the figures receive infinitesimal dimensions and look very much like dolls. Effect by means of expression is no longer possible, but even in larger figures the painter does not go beyond the general suggestion of a fulsome rapture. The illustration by the more intelligent but less skilful older artist, in between, to Canto 10, has a much deeper power to charm us—less external beauty, but nought but earnest energetic heads (Bassermann, Plate 49).

If we compare now these miniatures with the very characteristic accredited works of Clovio, of which Bradley ("The Life and Works of Giorgio Giulio Clovio," London, 1891) reproduces a whole series, it is impossible for us to recognise his style in them. Clovio lets us see in all his works that he is a very skilled, but completely dependent, imitator of Raphael, and especially of Giulio Romano and Michael Angelo, from whom he borrows whole groups from the Sistine Chapel quite unceremoniously. He takes especial delight in brawny muscular effects and in exaggerated strength,



Cesare Pollini, Miniature to Paradise XXXII.

*From the Codex Urb. 50 of the Vatican.*



and his works bear the undoubted impress of the late Cinquecento. In the case before us, however, we see pretty, elegant, but weak pictures, which belong as certainly to the early seventeenth century,—that period when Michael Angelo's influence was secondary to that of Correggio. Their style, however, is vividly suggestive of that of the school of Federigo Baroccio, of Urbino: "Gay, shimmering colours, affected mien, a hectic red on the illuminated passages of figures" (Burkhardt) are also their chief characteristics. One pupil of Baroccio was the famous miniature painter Cesare Pollini, of Perugia (1560-1630), and if any one has seen his works, a considerable number of which are preserved in the Pinakothek, in the museum, and in S. Agostino of his native town, he will doubt no longer that this painter is the author of the last series of miniatures of the Vatican codex. Documentary evidence in his favour, proving that he received the commission from Duke Francesco Maria II., will hardly, I think, be obtainable, although two passages in his biography do not at least point the other way; there we find, "*servì molti principi*," and "*Mi si dice, che molte (scil. miniature) se ne trovino in Roma. Ma quali e dove niun me l'ha detto*" (Pascoli, "*Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti Perugini*"). But if ever criticism of style was justified in solving a problem, we must refuse Clovio the authorship of these miniatures, and recognise Cesare Pollini as the originator of them.

As for the artistic value, and especially for the intellectual contents of the work, this question is indeed of secondary importance, and consequently our judgment concerning it is not affected by the question at all. Mannered, weak, and void, these much-admired miniatures are, in spite of their technically regular perfection and their external charm, the genuine work of an Epigone.





## PART III.

### *The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.*



## CHAPTER I.

### DANTE IN THE AGE OF THE ROCCOCO.

**R**OCCOCO and Dante: it is difficult to imagine two things so different in essence and nature, and it seems almost impossible to give credence to a union between elements so contrary; and yet the spirit of that age which conquered all things has worked this wonder too. A harmonious combination is of course out of the question, for the pastoral dress will not fit the serious admonisher, and his impressive words are lost in frivolous trifling. One thing, however, these works certainly have which gives them an advantage over their immediate predecessors—viz., a pronounced character: they may be bad pictures to Dante, but they are at least genuine Roccoco illustrations.

In 1596 the last illustrated Dante edition of the Cinquecento had appeared, and more than a century and a half must elapse before any idea of the necessity of a new edition arose again in Venice. Meantime an immense transformation had been accomplished in the field of book illustration. The robust wood-cut, which in the nature of the case, from the technical point of view, had to be confined to the mere outline, had been almost entirely supplanted by the copper-print, which laid itself open to softer impressions and graphic effects. Virtuoso of engraving on copper had followed the virtuosos of painting, and had developed a most extraordinary productiveness.

But their language of form was a borrowed one, their pathos was hollow, and in spite of their technical finish they were not able to awake a more earnest interest. The edition of which we will speak first still moves in these beaten tracks.

"La Divina Commedia con le Opere minori," Venezia 1757-58, Antonio Zatta, 5 volumes. This rich and handsome edition contains one hundred and six full-page copper-prints from the drawings of a number of artists. Francesco Fontebasso, G. Magnini, G. Zompini, Michel Angelo Schiavonio, G. Felippo Marcaggi, Gaspero Ticiani, G. Scaggiari, and Giacomo Guaranna are named. The pictures naturally are not of equal merit; in all, however, we see skill in technique along with lack of ideas and want of distinction in form. All can draw with skill puffed-out garments, massed clouds, shining suns, rich landscapes with ruins in the background, and vivid gestures; and yet all this gorgeous theatrical apparatus only serves the purpose of saying nothing with great pomp; and so far are they from reflecting the essence of Dante that these creations do not even bear the stamp of their own age. The most infertile eclecticism is arrayed before us in all its aridness. A contrast to these weak full pictures is formed by the borders, which are introduced here and there for the purpose of adorning the edition. An "argomento" in verse precedes every song, surrounded by a cartouche in the most pronounced baroque style, with faint allusions to the contents of the canto in question. It is just in this that we find traces of artistic peculiarity and a distinct talent for decoration—a talent for which the Venetians have ever been famed. Freely, and as it were sportively, the artists have produced their best work in these borders, while in their greater "compositions" tradition was fatal to them.

Just as feeble are the three engravings of a second illustrated edition of the Comedy which was published in 1778 in London, and by G. T. Masi & Co. in Leghorn (reprint, Leghorn, Tommaso Masi & Co., 1817). Each part has one picture:—Inferno 33: Ugolino and Roger on the ice, beside them Dante

and Virgil; signed, "Joan. Lapi inv. et scul. Libur. 1778." Purgatorio 19: Pope Hadrian, a bearded old man, comes up towards Dante, who inclines in reverence; beside them Virgil; in the background rocks, and the avaricious lying on the ground. Paradiso 1: Dante stands before the cloud-enthroned Beatrice, who, lifting her veil, looks at the sun.

A generation had come and gone since Antonio Zatta had printed his edition in Venice, and the firm was now called Zatta e figli. But a new style of decoration, coming from France, had forced for itself recognition, and had drawn book illustration irresistibly into its domain—the Roccoco. The edition of Zatta in 1784 had consequently also to experience a transformation conformable to the time. The result was a pretty pocket Dante, in the smallest bulk, adorned with graceful prints. Cristoforo dall' Acqua (1734–1787) was the engraver's name, to whom, in the first place, the work was entrusted; with him worked others—G. Zuliani, J. Alessandri, Baratti, and Daniotto. A reprint appeared in 1798 by Seb. Valle, in Venice. Original invention was not aimed at: all motives are, on the contrary, taken from the edition of 1757, some exactly, some with slight alterations; but it is so skilfully done that it takes one some time to notice the deception. Everything is serene and elegant, executed in the most minute fashion, and full of pleasing effects. The scenes are not executed as complete pictures, but they stand as headpieces at the head of each canto, and all finish in the foreground in a graceful roccoco flourish. There is indeed not a trace of earnest conception of the subject or of any deep comprehension of Dante; and even the damned in hell appear to be amusing themselves quite happily. But every one, I think, who turns over the pages of the little volume will take delight in the strongly marked character of the period shown in it; and that is always something.







Ornament to Inferno XII.

*From the Venice Edition, 1717 (Zatta).*



*L'Angel che venne in terra col decreto  
Delli molti anni sospirata pace,  
Ch'aperse 'l Ciel dal suo lungo divieto*

Copper Plate to Purgatorio X.

*From the Venice Edition, 1717 (Zatta and Sons).*



*Vidi gente per esso che piangea,  
Giacciando a terra tutta volta in guiso  
Adhaesit pavimento anima mea*

Copper-Plate to Purgatorio XIX.





## CHAPTER II.

FROM THE CLASSICAL PERIOD TO THE ROMANTIC.

TOWARDS the end of the eighteenth century Italian art had lost the last trace of separate importance; and we also, like every other historian of art, have nothing here to relate just now of the countrymen of Dante. It was reserved to Teutonic races to take in hand for generations the leadership in the domain of art, and any new and peculiar illustrations to the "Divine Comedy" owe their origin not to Italian artists, but to such as are of English or German nationality. We must not, however, imagine that Italy has lost its old virtue as the home of art; for the fact is that the very artists who have attempted to open up hitherto untrodden ways have been the most deeply penetrated by the classical spirit, and the point of departure of this Teutonic movement in art was—Rome. This is not the place to trace more minutely that peculiar development of our more modern German art which, after it had lost its own cunning and strength, took to itself first of all nothing but foreign ideals, and entered to a certain extent into the inheritance of the Latin nations to carry it to a higher stage of development. The conquest and the artistic expansion of our own time was what this development had for its ultimate aim, as we of the end of the century recognise; but the path towards modern times led through Hellenism and the Middle Ages, through Classicism and Romanticism. It is no great wonder then that Dante's work, as the most intimate fusion of antique, mediæval, and modern ideas, exercised a lasting influence on new German

art; and in truth we may say that the "Divine Comedy" was no mean factor in the transition from Classicism to Romanticism.

It is very characteristic that a scholar headed the new movement. Winckelmann, who had published his "Thoughts concerning the Imitation of Greek Works" as early as 1755, is actually the father of the modern classical tendency. Thus it came about that not only were the forms of the antique world utilised, but the old poets and writers were as far as possible rummaged for material. More than a classical art was thus created; there was formed a literary and antiquarian art, too, in strict accordance with the demand of the scholarly champion: "The paint-brush which the artist guides must first be steeped in knowledge." To-day we know the hidden rocks and shoals of this tendency, and we are aware that it was a mistake to wish to transfer to modern painting the laws of the antique plastic art. We must not then regard as a piece of pure chance that the first edition of Dante, which followed out consistently and consciously the classicising theories of Winckelmann, was not the work of a painter, but of a sculptor. It was the Englishman John Flaxman (1755-1826) who chose the Comedy as the subject of his representations after he had illustrated the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey." He studied at the Royal Academy in London, and went at an early age to Italy, where he tarried seven years, and himself drank in Winckelmann's enthusiasm for Greek art. He returned with all the advantages and defects of a Classicist; spirit and fancy had been mightily excited by the thought world of the ancients. He strained every faculty to reach great and earnest conceptions and a pure, sublime style. But his technique was defective; and it was not with impunity that he had educated his eye by contemplation of the antique statues instead of the human form. His plastic works are to-day accordingly almost forgotten, and he owes his fame chiefly to his outline sketches to classical works of poetry—Homer, Hesiod, Æschylus, and

Dante, in which it is most easy to pardon the preponderance of fancy over capacity. In these designs he unfolds to view all the richness of his creative power and a very considerable talent for composition; and the scenes from Homer especially (arranged after the fashion of antique vase pictures in the manner of a frieze and without any indication of background) contain a wealth of charming motives. Many an eccentric feature indeed mingles here too with the rest, and this may be said still more emphatically of his drawings to Dante, which appeared for the first time in 1793 in Rome, under the title, "*La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri. Composto da Giovanni Flaxman Scultore Inglese ed inciso da Tommaso Piroli.*" There are in all one hundred and eleven plates—viz., title-page, and thirty-eight to the *Inferno*, thirty-eight to the *Purgatorio*, and thirty-four to the *Paradiso*. He by no means borrows so largely from the antique in these pictures as in his other series, in which the very subjects brought with them their antique accompaniment. The nude bodies are indeed drawn here in that peculiar style which owes its rise to the study of the antique statues; the outline is the chief matter, and the muscular system is indicated only in the most general features in lines and stippling. But there were no antique prototypes for the demons of Hell and the angels of Paradise: the devils are borrowed from sixteenth-century Italian art, but in the figures of the angels we can see most clearly the nationality of the artist behind the classical mask; in their long hair, flowing robes, and often rather affected grace they are undoubtedly English. Flaxman's weakest side is his drawing of draped figures, and we often seek in vain for the body beneath the awkwardly drawn drapery. For instance, in *Inferno* 5, Dante, fainting through sympathy for Paul and Francesca, has almost the effect of a caricature; and the same applies to Dante, Virgil, and the angel at the gate of *Purgatorio*, where we get a full back view of each. The choirs of angels too, in the twenty-seventh canto of the *Paradiso*, are more singular than beautiful, with their arms held aloft with exact regularity; and the plate

to Purgatorio 7 is quite whimsical. The words of Virgil (lines 31-3)—

"There I with little innocents abide,  
Who by Death's fangs were bitten, ere exempt  
From human taint,"—

are illustrated by hovering children, at whom a skeleton snatches, stretching forth a bony hand.

With all the defects, which we cannot but recognise, there is an earnest and grand bent in the whole, and Flaxman's outlines are decidedly superior to many representations of the Comedy by reason of their individuality and impressiveness. The success of these first modern illustrations to Dante was correspondingly great, for as early as 1802 a new edition of the original prints by Piroli appeared, and numerous new editions and imitations followed, the most important of which I cite here to show how powerfully the reawakened interest for Dante's work and its artistic interpretation grew in a short time:—

La Divina Commedia, Penig, 1804. Dienemann & Co. A portfolio accompanying the text contains thirty-nine plates to the Inferno, engraved by Hummel after Flaxman. The same plates are found in the German translation by Kannegiesser of 1809 and 1824.

A Series of Engravings to illustrate Dante, engraved by Piroli, from the composition of John Flaxman, in the possession of Thomas Hope, Esq<sup>re</sup>. London, 1807.

La Divina Commedia, incisa a contorno da Luigi Nuti. Appeared before 1821. (Reduced copies after Flaxman.)

Atlante Dantesco per poter servire ad ogni edizione della Divina Commedia, ossia l'Inferno, il Purgatorio, e il Paradiso, composti dal Sig. Giovanni Flaxman, già incisi da Sig. Tommaso Piroli, ed ora intagliati dal Sig. Filippo Pistrucci. Milano, presso Batelli e Fanfani, 1822.

Invenzioni di Giovanni Flaxman sulla Divina Commedia. Milano 1823, G. Vallardi. (Biblioteca classica pittorica.)

- Invenzioni sulla Divina Commedia di Giovanni Flaxman. Roma, D. Parenti, ca. 1826.
- La Divina Commedia, con rami disegnati dal Flaxman e incisi dal cav. Lasinio figlio. Firenze, Ciardetti (Molini), 1830-41.
- John Flaxman's Umrisse zu Dante Alighieri's Göttlicher Komödie. Karlsruhe, Kundt, 1833-35.
- Die göttliche Komödie, übersetzt von J. F. Heigelin. Blau-beuren, Mangold, 1836-37. Contains six outlines after Flaxman: Inferno 3 and 33, Purgatorio 1 and 30, Paradiso 1 and 14.
- Russian Edition of the Inferno. S. Petersburg, 1842, E. Fischer. With thirty-four plates, after Flaxman.
- Les Œuvres de Dante, traduites en prose rythmique. Paris, 1844. Contains copies after Flaxman.
- The Vision; or Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise of Dante Alighieri. Translated by H. F. Cary. Illustrated with twelve designs by John Flaxman. New York, Appleton and Co., 1845.
- La Divina Commedia, Naples, A. Festa. 1855. With twenty-six plates after Flaxman.
- Dante, translated into English verse by J. C. Wright. With thirty-four plates after Flaxman. London, Bohn, 1855 and 1861.
- La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri chiarata con note ad uso della gioventù ed illustrata da cento tavole di composizione da Giovanni Flaxman. Milan, Vallardi, 1865.
- Illustrations of the Divine Poem of Dante Alighieri, by John Flaxman. With full description to each engraving, from the translation by H. F. Cary. London, Bell & Daldy, 1866.
- Select Compositions from Dante's Divine Drama, designed by John Flaxman, R.A., Sculptor. London, Bell & Sons, 1882.

The compositions are further contained in the collection of all the drawings of Flaxman, which was published in Paris

by Reveil; and lastly, the illustrated edition by George Scharf (1820-95) is nothing else than a copy of Flaxman. Its title runs:

The Divine Comedy; or, the Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise of Dante Alighieri. Rendered into English by Frederick Pollock. With fifty illustrations drawn by George Scharf, engraved by Dalziel. London, Chapman & Hall, 1854.

With less external success, but with far deeper internal enthusiasm, did one of the friends and pupils of Flaxman approach the "Divine Comedy"—namely, William Blake (1757-1827), whose compositions, although to-day almost forgotten and never mentioned in any treatise on the pictures to Dante, are to be ranked among the most interesting artistic works suggested by the Comedy.

For long regarded as a mad genius, and treated half sympathetically, half contemptuously as such, Blake now enjoys, especially in England, the reputation of being the forerunner of the most modern symbolism, and is prized with an almost exaggerated admiration. Blake was poet and painter, philosopher and visionary. Even in his illustrations to "Young's Night Thoughts" he was most attracted by the description of the next world, and his whole art was a series of revelations in which the supersensual took for him tangible form. "All the vacant space of the earth and the air seemed to him to be trembling beneath the beat of spirits' wings and groaning beneath the tread of their feet. The flowers and grass and the stars and stones spoke to him with living lips and gazed upon him with living eyes. Hands emerging from the shadows of material nature reached forth to seize him, to guide him or to restrain. What are hallucinations to others were for him realities. Upon his path and before his easel, under his eyes and before his ears, there moved and gathered, shone and sang, an infinite spirit life. All the uncanny beings which flutter and hover in the atmosphere talked with him, comforted



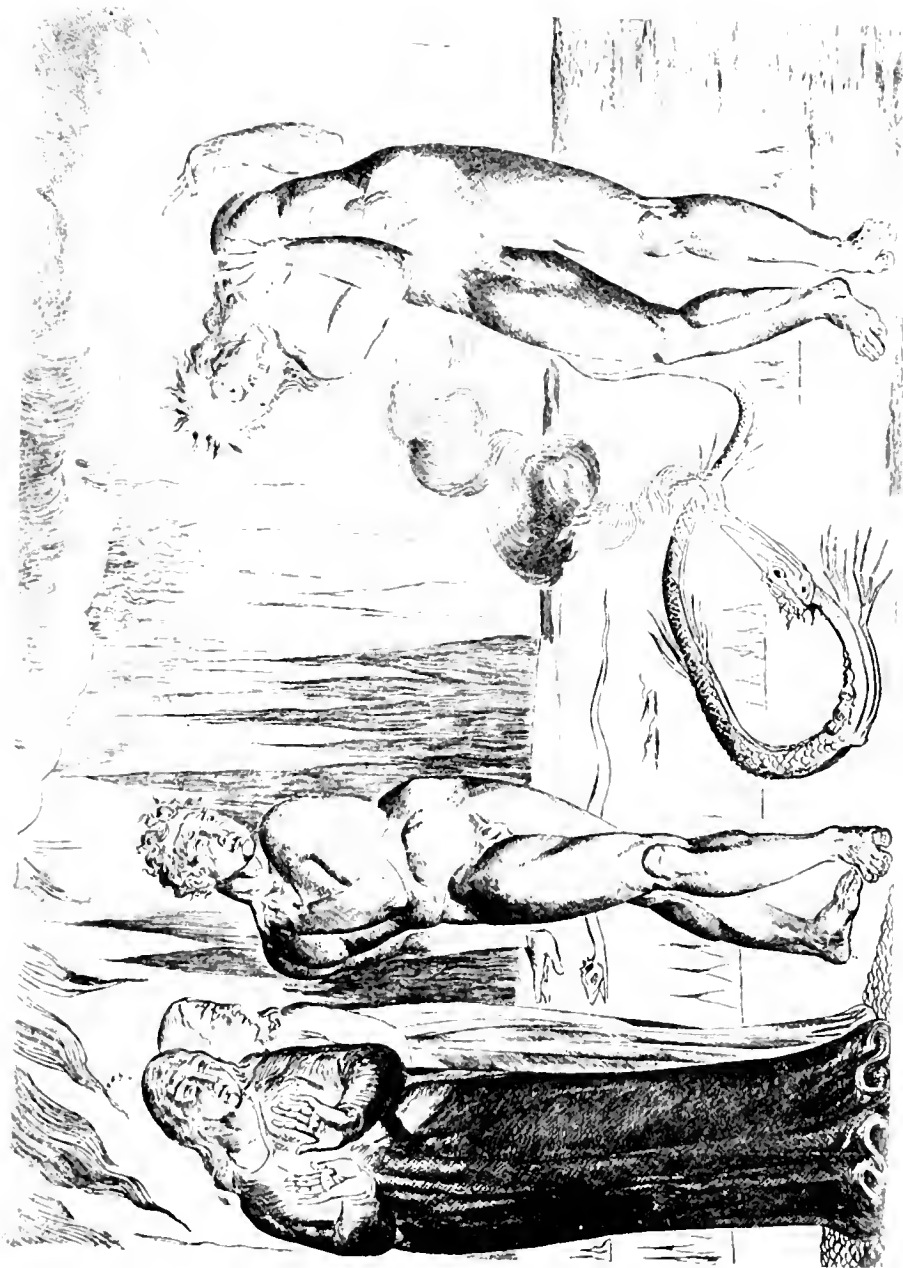
or menaced him. Under the damp mantle of the grass, in the fleecy cloud rising from the plain, strange faces grinned at him and white hairs fluttered. Tempters and guardian angels, doubles of the living and phantoms of the dead, peopled the air which waved around him, the fields and mountains which met his gaze." This account, which I cite from Muther's "History of Painting," shows us brilliantly the almost morbidly sensitive nature of the artist; it explains to us, moreover, his method—so different from that of all his predecessors—of approaching Dante. It is the spirit world which he seeks for there and feasts on; not merely Dante's spirit world—for Dante's philosophy differed much from his—but his own, which Dante's poem had awakened and stimulated. He gives not illustrations, but visions.

It was shortly before Blake's death that his faithful friend, John Linnell, the landscape painter, asked him to produce a series of illustrations to Dante. The work dragged on during the years 1825 and 1826; and on his deathbed even, the artist had his large drawing-book before him, which was gradually filled up with ninety-eight illustrations in water-colours. They still exist, for the most part unfinished, in the possession of the family of Linnell, and only illustrate the Inferno and the Purgatorio, as he did not live to begin the Paradiso. Several of them were published in 1896 in *The Savoy* by W. B. Yeats. These are: Inferno 3, Dante and Virgil at the gate of Hell; Inferno 7, souls battling in the Styx; Inferno 10, Dante and Farinata degli Uberti; Inferno 31, Antæus placing the poets in the lower circle; Purgatorio 4, Dante and Virgil scaling the rocks; Purgatorio 27, Dante, Virgil, and Statius asleep; Purgatorio 29, the Chariot of the Church; and lastly, a second illustration from the same canto, from a copy by the hand of Linnell. Seven pages were engraved on copper by Blake himself, and show us, although they are likewise unfinished, the artist's final conception of the work. They are the following: Inferno 5, the souls of the carnal driven by the blast, Dante fainting

with pity (reproduced in *The Sassy*); Inferno 22, Ciampolo held by devils on a hook (and from the same canto a very incomplete representation of the wrestling devils); Inferno 25, Dante and Virgil perceive Agnello Brunelleschi and two other sinners (a second scene from the same canto shows the poets and the transformation of Buoso Donati, likewise reproduced in *The Sassy*); Inferno 29, souls riving themselves, the poets in converse with Adam of Brescia; lastly, Inferno 32, souls in the eternal ice. The artist's treatment of form is fully in unison with his visionary conception. Delicate, dreamy, and vague many of the scenes appear, which seem to rise for a moment, in the Inferno out of a flaming sea of fire, and in the Purgatorio out of a heavy vaporous atmosphere. The copper-prints, for which the technique of Marcanton served him as the ideal, show more forcible forms and more definite outlines. The representation of Dante and Virgil is quite unique; there is no trace of the likeness of a portrait—both poets have rather the soft, almost feminine, features which Blake loved to give to his embodiments of soul. Here too he wanted to depict not the body, but the soul. Specially surprising are also the souls fighting in the waters of Styx, who in serried ranks rush upon each other with uplifted fists in rage—a terrible picture, which haunts us like a bad dream. Thus in England, where Romanticism was never fully developed in the same sense as in Germany, we see arise out of the school of a Classicist sculptor the harbinger of modern symbolism, the direct precursor of Rossetti; but in Dante the two movements had a common ground.

There is no doubt of the fact that Flaxman's sketches had a stimulating effect on the German artists in Rome; but yet, apart from this, keen interest in Dante had arisen at that time in Germany, as may be seen from the fact that the first German translation of the Comedy by Bachenschwanz appeared in Leipzig 1767-69. Thus was drawn into the sphere of the great Florentine the man who proposed to pave

PLATE XIII



William Blake.

*Copper-Plate to Inferno. V. VI.*



the way for a new era in art by a renaissance of Greek art, and to whom this very prepossession for antique traditions became a curse—namely:

Jacob Asmus Carstens (1754-98). One illustration alone (with a few studies connected with it) is all we possess of the much-disputed master relating to Dante; and yet it is of the greatest interest to see how the very man who at one time in the Academy scarcely made more than a dozen studies from life a year, because the antique seemed to him to be the sole pure source of all art, and who otherwise chose almost always antique subjects for his pictures, yet shortly before his death was touched by the tendency of the time and affected by the breath of the spirit of mediævalism. The illustration to Dante appeared in 1796, and Carstens died two years later at the age of forty-four. Would the artist have experienced the change to Romanticism through the inspirations of Dante's mediæval Christian world if a longer life had been granted him? One is almost inclined to answer the question in the affirmative, after looking at the drawing in the museum in Weimar. The very choice of subject brings it close to the romantic circle of ideas: Paul and Francesca, the unhappy lovers, is the subject—a subject rather hackneyed by the later Romanticists—which he too drew from the inexhaustible store of the Comedy, stimulated by the Romanticist Schlegel's translation of the fifth canto of the *Inferno*, published in the *Horen*. More surprising still is his way of treating the theme. The drawing—two feet long, and in outline—shows on the left a gorgeous blowing wind demon sitting on a pile of clouds; the centre is occupied mostly by naked souls—a numerous band, driven hither and thither by the whirlwind. From among the crowd come Paul and Francesca; they hover up to Dante and Virgil, who are standing in the foreground on the right. In the background is Minos enthroned; devils bring the sinners before his seat of judgment and hurry off with the damned. In contrast to Flaxman, who as a genuine Classicist could not

show Paul and Francesca otherwise than as nude, Carstens has clothed them both in mediæval costume; Paolo wears well-fitting breeches with puffs, doublet, and feathered cap, Francesca a dress with puff sleeves—a strange phenomenon in the work of the Classicist Carstens! Knight and Princess: they charm us here like a presentiment of Romanticism. The Dante picture of Carstens cannot indeed hold the field against his other works; the romantic element was still a foreign one in his blood, and even his compositions to Ossian and Goethe's *Faust* are far inferior to those where he could breathe the classic air. The drawing was engraved by C. G. Rahl, and also by Müller in his work on Carstens, illustrated with copper-plates (Plate 23). It is contained, moreover, in the "Photographien nach den Original-Zeichnungen von Jac. A. Carstens im Grossh. Museum zu Weimar, herausg. von William Kemlein." Here also are given the four beautiful studies: Dante and Virgil, on brown paper in pencil; the wind demon on the left, in sanguine; the hovering middle group, in sanguine; Dante's head, in chalk.

In close connection with Carstens another German master in Rome was energetically occupied with the "Divine Comedy":

Joseph Anton Koch (1768–1839). Both were intimate friends, and Carstens is said to have died in Koch's arms. Artistically too the Tyrolese peasant's son moved in the path of his older friend; but he was a much healthier and more vigorous nature, and far more susceptible to fantastic, nay, romantic, themes and subjects. He is known to-day only as the creator of those landscapes which we are accustomed to call "heroic." A not less essential side of his art, however, is his study of Dante, a study which was lifelong; and in this department he follows much less the classical direction of Carstens, which he acknowledged so faithfully in his landscapes and transferred to a new domain. He copied Carstens' drawing of Hell several times, twice in pen and ink and once in a water-colour sketch, now in the Thorwaldsen Museum at Copenhagen; this shows us by whom he was inspired with

the love for the poem, which soon became an element in his life. "Koch" (so writes Riegel) "felt himself so enraptured by Dante that he found in him as it were the whole happiness of his life, and illustrated unceasingly, in new and ever new drawings, the immortal poem. Often in the later years of his life he was seen in the streets of Rome declaiming with pathos whole passages of the Comedy, and keeping time with his thick stick on the pavement." Freiherr von Uexküll reports the same thing in his "*Tagebücher aus Rom*": "If he is led on to talk of his political sentiments and of Dante, a valve has been opened which cannot be soon closed." And from other quarters we hear that the first question he used to ask painters newly come to Rome was whether they had read Dante. The artist himself has expressed his opinion very characteristically on Dante and his relation to plastic art on several occasions. For instance, in his "*Thoughts on Painting*," published by David Strauss, where he says: "In Italy, in the times of Dante, Petrarca, and Ariosto, other arts also flourished; with Torquato Tasso Italian poetry came to an end, and plastic art likewise. In Dante's age painting was indeed still deficient in culture and finish; but in the most important element—*i.e.* the poetic—it was even then capable of joining hands with Dante's poetry: in fact, it had then a deeper import than it shows in the post-Raphaelite period, in spite of the grand perfection of its technique. To compare Tasso with Dante is like comparing Caracci with Michael Angelo." In a letter adduced by Riegel he writes to the effect that the "whole 'Divine Comedy' is a Christian allegory, and consequently suitable for the most splendid representation in art." This very expression, moreover, shows us how far he has outstripped Carstens. In this conception he stretches out a friendly hand to budding Romanticism.

Boundless almost is the number of the compositions from Dante which Koch has created, and he has been justly called the most productive of all later German Dante illustrators. The library of the Royal Academy of Plastic Arts in Vienna

alone possesses fifty-six of his pen drawings to the Comedy, fifty-one of which are from the Inferno. Several of them are, it is true, as the researches of Th. Frimmel have proved, more or less retouched by Koch's son-in-law, Michael Wittmer, who completed many compositions, which had originally just been sketched in, in a careful but rather timid fashion. Plate No. 6523 gives the most indubitable proof of this. On it we read: "Koch 1803 invenit, (Wit)tmer dis. 1839"; and upon this foundation Frimmel thinks himself justified in considering genuine among the Viennese drawings only the following: Nos. 6516, 6517, 6518, 6520, 6521, 6522, 6524-37 inclusive, 6540, 6490-93 inclusive, 6497, 6499, 6502, 6503, 6504, 6507, 6510, 6512; doubtful he considers 6508, 6511, 6513, and 6514. The rest he does attribute originally to Koch, but they have been retouched by Wittmer either with faint penstrokes, as in Nos. 6494, 6500, 6505, 6515, or else have been provided with shading, as in Nos. 6498, 6543, 6495. Nos. 6519 and 6523, lastly, are almost entirely drawn by Wittmer. There is in Vienna an intention to publish these drawings, but unfortunately as yet it has not been put into practice. Kraus (fig. 66) has reproduced the scene to Inferno 33, Ugolino in prison.

Koch's other Dante drawings are chiefly to the Inferno, seldom to the Purgatorio, and never to the Paradiso. A large album, consisting of forty drawings in sepia, is in the Royal "Secundogenitur Bibliothek" in Dresden. Drawn originally for an Englishman, Dr. Nott, these pictures came into the possession, later, of Frederic William IV., who presented them to his brother-in-law, King John of Saxony. There are illustrations here to each canto of the Inferno, and to Cantos 2, 9, and 28 of the Purgatorio; and especially those to the Inferno possess great dramatic force and vigorous, nay, robust modelling, with energetic and broad penstrokes such as Stradano alone among all other illustrators of Dante possesses. Little is evident of the influence of the antique, but, on the contrary, a study of Signorelli and Michael Angelo is very noticeable. Koch



PLATE XIV.



Joseph Anton Koch.

*Satan Dancing to Inferno. V&A*



prudently refrains from coloured execution; but a reddish tone hovers like a play of fire over all the drawings—smoke and vapour seem to cast a blackness over the air. The picture of the devil especially who is throwing the Elder of Lucca into the bubbling pitch, and of Agnello Brunelleschi attacked by the six-legged dragon (*vide* Plate 14), are tremendously impressive. The scenes from the Purgatorio are not nearly so good; a complete change of technique and form takes place, and a soft mood steals in which approximates to that of the Nazarenes.

Freiherr v. Marschall, of Karlsruhe, possesses twenty-six pen drawings—namely, to Inferno 1 and 4, two to Canto 5, then one each to Cantos 6, 7, and 12; two each to Cantos 13 and 14, one to Canto 18, three to Canto 21 (three connected pages, with four sketches representing the devil and the Elder of Lucca), three to Canto 22, two to Canto 23, one to Canto 25, two to Canto 27; lastly, one each to Cantos 33 and 34. A descriptive account of them is to be found in Prestel's auction catalogue of the Marschall collection of the year 1879; but they were not sold then, and remained in the possession of the family.

A fourth and larger series of Koch's pictures to Dante is in the Ferdinandeum at Innsbruck—viz., twelve folio leaves, which contain fourteen designs, partly in pencil, partly in Indian ink; they were published under the title, "*Aus Dante's Göttlicher Komödie. Nach Originalhandzeichnungen von J. Koch photographirt. Aus dem photographischen Atelier in München, 1863.*" These are three sketches of Charon's boat (Inferno 3), and drawings to Inferno 9: the angel opens with his staff the gate of the City of the Damned, in which the furies and devils appear; the figure of the angel is repeated separately. Further, to Inferno 12, Dante, Virgil, and a centaur; Inferno 13, the wood of the suicides and the harpies; Purgatorio 28, Dante, Virgil, and Statius see Matilda. To these may be added six designs for the frescoes in the Villa Massimo, which will come up for consideration below.

The Stuttgart Museum also has two separate drawings; and another one—viz., to Inferno 21, belonging to Frau Rath Schlosser, of the Monastery of Neuburg, near Heidelberg—was published in the “Stifts-Album,” Heidelberg, 1860, by J. Meder.

Koch seemed then to be the right man to undertake the task of bringing to a close the painting of the Dante room in the casino of the Villa Massimo in Rome, where the artistically minded Marchese Camillo Massimo brought the band of German artists together for the purpose of creating a monumental work of art. The roof of this room had been adorned by Philip Veit with scenes from the Paradiso from designs by Cornelius. And yet Koch’s frescoes are the least successful of the whole cycle. In 1825 he was occupied with the designs, which were carried out in the years 1826–29. The artist was then nearly sixty years old when he, for the first time in his life, entered upon a task of such magnitude. This fact and the unwonted technique make it quite intelligible that the artist shows himself much weaker here, on this large scale, than in his drawings.

On the entrance wall is Dante, threatened by lion, leopard, and she-wolf, finding Virgil (Lübke-Lützow, *Denkmäler der Kunst*, Plate 106, fig. 3). On the right is Minos, the judge of Hell, in the midst of the other chief figures of the Inferno, such as Cerberus, Geryon, Charon, Agnello Brunelleschi, Francesca and Paul, Ugolino and Roger. The wall opposite the entrance represents the gate of Purgatory guarded by an angel; on both sides the struggle between the good and bad spirit over the soul of Buonconte, and the angels which drive the serpent from the Valley of Expectation; while in the foreground the boat laden with souls and guided by an angel draws near to the shore of Purification. The window wall represents the real Purgatory, with those under penance for the seven deadly sins (reproduced in lithography by Joh. Karl Koch and by Kauffmann, and engraved by Unger). Six different designs and sketches for these frescoes, some already ruled with a

network of squares with a view to execution on a larger scale, are in the Ferdinandeum at Innsbruck. Prestel's fine art repository in Frankfurt has at the present moment four water-colour studies of the same subject for sale.

In four copper-prints engraved by his own hand, based to some extent on the Innsbruck drawings, Koch also showed his interest in Dante's poetry: *Inferno* 1, Dante and the allegorical beasts (reproduced by Kraus, fig. 67); *Inferno* 3, Charon; *Inferno* 12, the punishment of the tyrants (centaurs); *Inferno* 27, the struggle of S. Francis with the devil for the soul of Guido da Montefeltro. The artist treated the latter theme in the same way in an oil painting which hangs in the picture gallery of the Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck (No. 354), and shows the hard, variegated colouring of the Nazarenes.

If we look at Koch's work as a whole, it is difficult to decide which most to admire—the intensity with which the German seized upon the Italian poem and turned it to artistic account in an independent manner, or the variety of the modes of expression which he brought into the service of one and the same subject. In pen drawing and water-colour, in fresco and oil painting, as well as in copper engraving, he continually brings the “*Divine Comedy*” before us, and he would certainly have to be reckoned among the greatest Dante illustrators of all times if it were not for the fact that he was inspired almost entirely by the *Inferno* alone.

Koch's successor in the domain of the historical landscape, Friedrich Preller (1804–78), likewise was not untouched by Dante. In the collection of King John of Saxony there is by him a large drawing to *Inferno* 1 depicting Dante, Virgil, and the beasts in the wood (Locella, Plate 1). The picture combines all the good qualities and all the defects of the art of Preller. It represents a noble landscape from the Sabine mountains, with brilliant groups of trees and classical lines. But it is a mere chance that Dante and Virgil are the individuals we meet there; and the divine sufferer, Ulysses, would have fitted into that scenery as well, if not better.

More directly than by Koch and Preller, Carstens' classical and consequently predominatingly plastic ideal was realised and carried out again by a sculptor. The Dane, Bertel Thorwaldsen (1770-1844), gave Classicism its most consistent expression; but he too, who, like Carstens, otherwise lived only in the antique, was filled with the general interest for Dante, and drew several scenes from the Comedy, of which one—"The Scene with the Great Dragon"—was engraved by Riepenhausen, and thus became known in wider circles. I have not seen the picture, but I suspect that it represents the poets on Geryon's back.

Less known, and not mentioned in any competent work, is a series of seventeen hand drawings of the Munich painter and director of the gallery, Robert von Langer (1783-1846), which are in the Royal Print Room at Munich. He was educated by his father, Peter von Langer, in the rigid classical tradition, and was not able to cast off this influence, although the changes of the time in other respects were not without effect on him. His compositions, too, to the *Inferno* bear the stamp of a halting period of transition, and therefore cannot fully satisfy us; in spite of that, they may be mentioned here one by one to save them from falling altogether into oblivion:—

Canto 2: Beatrice summons Virgil from the circle of virtuous pagans to be Dante's conductor. This picture naturally has a strongly classical character. Canto 3: The boat of Charon. Canto 4: Dante, awakened by the clap of thunder, stands with Virgil on the brink of the infernal pit. Canto 5: The naked figures of Francesca and Paul hover through the air; Dante lies on the ground fainting with pity. Canto 6: Cerberus claws the gluttons in pieces. Canto 7: The usurers and spendthrifts roll along heavy blocks of rock. In the background the wrathful giant figure of Pluto. Canto 8: The boat of Phlegias. Filippo Argenti is repelled by Virgil. Canto 9: The messenger of heaven opens for the poets the gate of the City of Dis. Canto 10: Dante talks with Farinata,

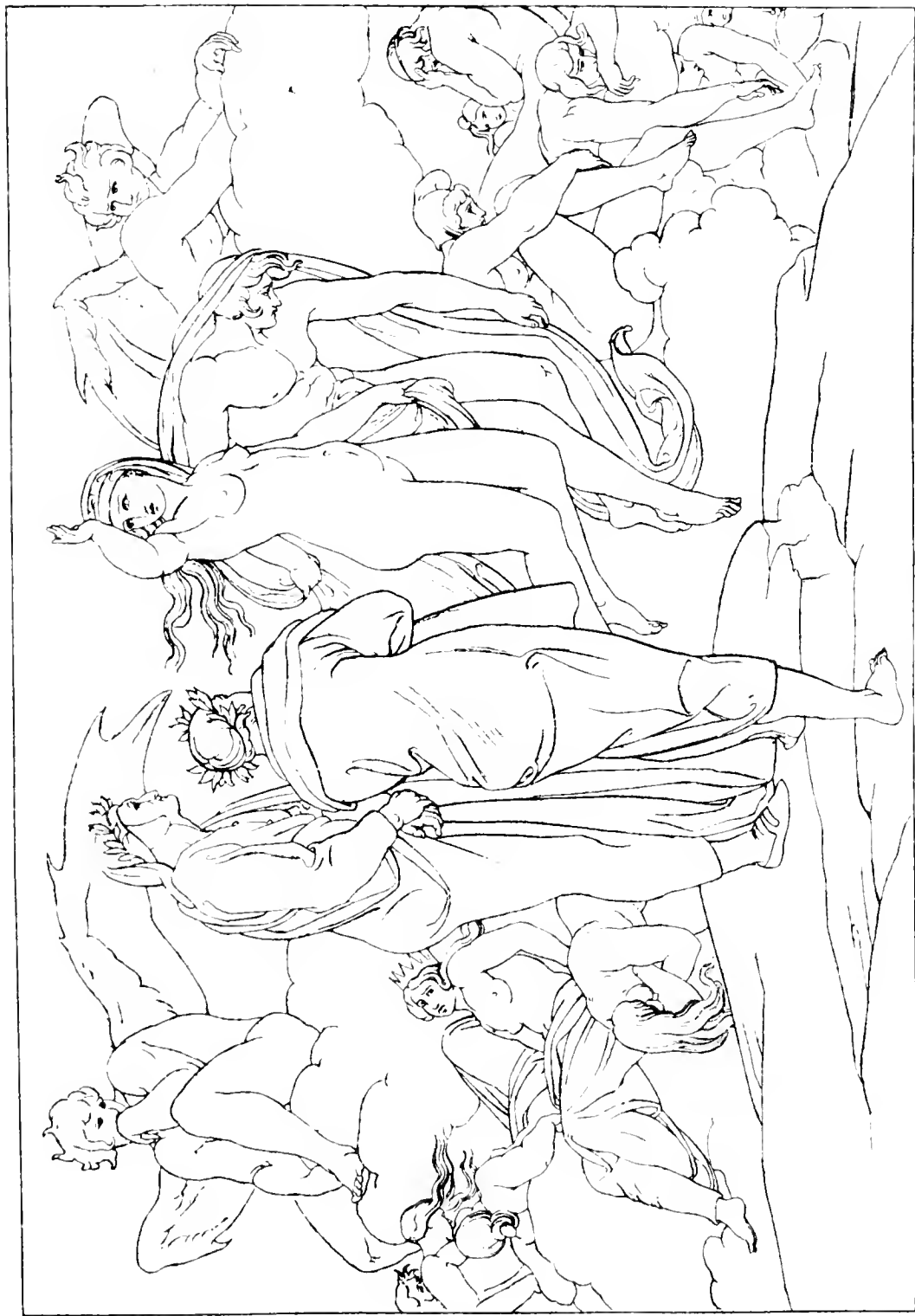
who lifts himself up out of a flaming grave. There is here an attempt made at light contrast in the manner of the Romantics. Canto 11: The poets sit in converse at the flaming grave of Pope Anastasius. Canto 15: Dante and Virgil cross by a narrow dyke over to the souls tormented by flames of fire; Brunetto Latini clutches at Dante's mantle. Strikingly ill-drawn are the arms of Dante, which are much too long—a fault into which Langer often fell. Canto 19: The poets beside Pope Nicolas, who for his simony is sticking head down in a round hole, his feet tormented by flames. Canto 20: An enchantress sits in a circle of magic signs, beside her a smoking tripod, round her all kinds of uncanny animals—owls, snakes, toads, bats. This is a clear tribute paid to Romanticism, which is repeated in a strikingly similar fashion in Francesco Scaramuzza (*vide* below). But the witch retains outwardly a classical form, and cannot deny relationship with the sibyls of Michael Angelo. Canto 23: The cowl-wearing hypocrites stride over the body of Caiphas crucified on the ground. Canto 27: The fight of S. Francis with the devil for the soul of Guido da Montefeltro. Canto 33: The poets see in the Ptolomea weeping sinners shut in for ever in the ice. Canto 34: Dante and Virgil ascend once more to the upper air and see the stars again.

Langer does not merely give outlines, like the pure Classicists, but he draws with careful shading, and gives, especially to his nude figures, a better modelling. But still he too is biassed towards an empty generalisation of forms which is very far distant from a real study of nature, and reminds us in every touch of the sculpture gallery. His heads show withal an exaggerated tendency to characterisation, such as was peculiar to the contemporary Italians, Ademollo and Pinelli; and their works, of which mention will be made below, were certainly not unknown to him. An oil painting by the artist which depicts Dante led by Virgil is in the gallery at Stuttgart.

Once more, at a time when all around Romanticism

was in full bloom, Carstens was to be restored to life, and with him German Classicism in the person of Buonaventura Genelli (1798-1868), born in the death year of Carstens. Starting from the same principles as Carstens, he arrived at the same results; like him, he dreamed of a golden age with classical tranquillity and clearness, and like Carstens he lost every feeling for the real world. His art therefore has also a predominatingly plastic character, and the technical side appears grossly neglected; his activity, moreover, is confined to cartoons and sketches, and his defective study of nature is not masked by his straining after abstract beauty. All those weaknesses are seen together in his thirty-six sketches to Dante, which originated in Munich between 1840 and 1846, and were published between 1846 and 1852 in copper-prints engraved by Hermann Schütz (new edition, with text by Jordan, Leipzig, Dürr, 1867). The original drawings are in the possession of Dr. Ed. Cichorius, in Dresden: one picture—the Death of St. Francis—is in the Demiani collection of the Stadt Museum at Leipzig; and a sepia drawing to the Purgatorio, Canto 9, illustrating Dante's dream, is preserved in the Secundogenitur Bibliothek at Dresden (Locella, Plate 11). His conventional figure drawing asserts itself with more disturbing effect in Genelli's sketches to Dante than in his scenes from the antique; and his heavy debt to Carstens (viz., *inter alia*, the wind demon in the fifth canto of the Inferno), nay, more, to several compositions of Flaxman, is very striking. Sixteen of the plates are taken from the Inferno, twelve from the Purgatorio, and only eight from the Paradiso. The last are the weakest; for he takes especial delight, as in all his works, in the representation of the naked human form, which he was never tired of reproducing in the most daring situations. The romantic-mystical element certainly was more alien to him; he was more at home on classical ground. The more peculiar is it that, though he does indeed represent Paul and Francesca in hell as naked, he yet occupies himself in a special scene





Buonaventura Genelli.

*Descent to Inferno I.*



with the romantic story of the lovers. Ugolino in the Tower of Starvation too comes in for his share of attention; and the mystic legend of St. Francis and poverty in the *Paradiso* inspires him to four illustrations. With him too, then, the "Divine Comedy" is a bridge from Classicism to Romanticism. One thing, however, marks the work from beginning to end: a strong personal trait, the expression of a decided artistic individuality. He does not always succeed in reproducing Dante exactly, but he always remains Genelli. This and the great beauty of many of his nude figures assure his sketches to Dante also a prominent place in the history of art for all time.

We cannot speak of Genelli here without calling to mind another magnificent work of art which stands in close relation to his Dante cycle; I mean the Dante symphony by Franz Liszt. Separate actions of the Comedy had indeed often before inspired musical composers; but these were only detached scenes, in which the music formed the accompaniment to the words, and which we cannot be expected to dilate on here. It is otherwise with the work of Liszt. The master of programme music wished to find symphonic expression for the spirit of the "Divine Comedy," and he tried to carry out for this end what Richard Wagner had already carried out in opera—viz., the union of all the sister arts in a united, mighty, and harmonious whole. There were two things which above all else gave his plans a definite direction: the diorama, which had been then perfected by Gropius, in Berlin, and raised to a high pitch of artistic excellence; and Genelli's newly finished drawings to Dante. "Liszt thought," writes Lina Ramann in her biography of Liszt, "that he would attain this union of arts in symphony by attracting to it the arts of painting and singing. Painting was to accompany the symphony dioramatically in pictures, and song—a chorus at the end of the work—was to announce in a mystic Magnificat the recompense of sorrows in the blessedness won. The pictures, which were to follow the poem as

closely as possible, were to depict at the same time as the symphony the Inferno and the Purgatorio, with its procession of souls, ever rising higher and becoming brighter and purer, on their way to the celestial spheres, until the mystical splendour of bliss in God was attained. Thus these super-terrestrial portions of the great poem should not be exclusively and solely perceived through the medium of an intellectual representation, but should assert themselves as a reality through ear and eye. The intention was to induce the Dante-inspired Genelli to execute the pictures. The idea was grand, but Liszt was compelled to renounce it by force of circumstances. The Dante symphony was planned by order of the Princess Carolyne v. Sayn-Wittgenstein. Liszt was to produce the symphony after the ideal plan had been fixed. The princess undertook to look after the rest, intending to devote a considerable sum of money to the execution of the task; but with the turn in her fortunes, which brought her from great wealth to a state approaching to poverty, the idea fell to the ground for want of the needful funds to carry it out." It was a modest tribute to this splendid conception that the publishers of the Dante symphony decked the outer cover of the score at least with one of Genelli's drawings from the Comedy, and chose, in consideration of the charming *Andante amoroso*, in the first movement, the scene of Paul Malatesta and Francesca da Rimini. It will probably be reserved for later generations to come nearer the idea of the master.

Meanwhile the classical movement had assumed in France and Italy forms different from those in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century. While Greece was the unattainable ideal of the German artists, these others attached themselves to the cognate Roman art, and that the more since the French Revolution had set up the Roman Republic as the political model of the French nation. The great dictator of French art of this period, Jacques Louis David, painted not Greek myths, but Roman history. Works of Roman art, especially gems, were regarded as models, from which

the features, the costumes, the decorations of the weapons and accessories were imitated sedulously and with archæological exactness.

A series of prints to the "Divine Comedy," published in 1813 by Blaise, in Paris, sprang from the same tendency. The title runs: "*La Divina Comedia di Dante Alighieri, cioè l'Inferno, il Purgatorio, ed il Paradiso. Composta ed incisa da Sofia Giacomelli.*" Madame Chomel, so runs the French name of the artist, has not got beyond an advanced stage of dilettantism, and the prints are technically extremely weak. But they testify to a great love and mastery of the subject-matter, and they offer much that is interesting as an expression of their times. Every canto, up to the last of the *Paradiso*, is the subject of one outline drawing; and the "Roman mode" (for it can now hardly be called anything else) is everywhere evident. All the figures are as if drawn from statues, and the whole appears withal (just because the hand of the amateur is seen throughout) extremely mannered—in fact, sometimes insipid; at any rate, these prints mark no advancement in the domain of Dante illustration.

The same may be said of a grandly planned undertaking, which was henceforth to attest the reawakened interest in Italy also for the "Divine Comedy"; this is the so-called *Edizione dell' Ancora*, which appeared 1817–19. Its cycle of pictures, drawn by two artists, Luigi Ademollo (1764–1849) and Francesco Nenci (born about 1782), was engraved by a number of hands. The complete title runs: "*La Divina Commedia, Firenze, all' insegna dell' Ancora*" (four volumes in folio, with one hundred and twenty-five plates). The *Inferno* contains forty-four prints, drawn by Ademollo, engraved partly by the same artist and partly by Lasinio; the drawings to the *Purgatorio* also, forty in number, were planned by Ademollo and engraved by his own hand. Canto 27 alone is by Nenci. The latter then illustrated the whole of the *Paradiso* in forty-one pictures, which were engraved in copper by Giovanni Maselli, Em. Lapi, Innoc.

Migliavacca, Lasinio, and V. Benucci. The work is dedicated to the sculptor Canova, and this is very characteristic of the tendency to which it belongs. But the result unfortunately does not come up to the pains spent upon the edition. The pictures of Ademollo bear throughout the stamp of an affected classicism, which nevertheless does not keep him from falling into crudeness, nay, coarseness. Antique masks are put upon the figures; and his Virgil, for instance, with well-trimmed whiskers, as well as his female personages, with their *frisures à la grecque* on empty modern heads, are nothing less than repulsive. In addition, his sense of form was very defective and his tendency to exaggeration very strong. The bodies are throughout accurately drawn, and many of the heads—the drawing of which shows a certain attempt at realism—are of brutal coarseness; and the figures of the devils are again caricatures like those in the fifteenth century. Ademollo appears strongly under the influence of French art; and the figures of Paul Malatesta and Francesca da Rimini are said to be the unmistakable portraits of M. de Chateaubriand and Mme. Récamier. Tamer, but also more effeminate, are the compositions of Nenci, who had been evidently affected by the German pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. It is not difficult, moreover, to discover in his works reminiscences of quite a number of the classical masters of the Italian school, and the expression of his figures is frequently very insipid and mawkish in effect. When all is said, this edition is a most unedifying product of the transition; throughout we meet mannerism, eclecticism, lack of originality—nowhere the fresh pulse-beat of a personal artistic life.

All the more wonderful does it appear that the edition was often reprinted. For the “Album Dantesco, contenente 125 tavole in rame, disegnatte ed incise da Ademollo, Nenci, Lasinio, Maselli ed altri celebri artisti, Firenze, G. H. Giglione, 1865,” is nothing more than a separate edition of the plates in the Edizione dell’ Ancora. The one hundred and twenty-five plates of the edition of Giuseppe Campi, too, which were published in 1888 by the Unione Tipografico-Editrice,

are diminished lithographical reproductions of the pictures of Ademollo and Nenci. Even in 1893 Bernhard Schuler, at Munich, could think of nothing better in the way of a Dante edition than a reproduction of those one hundred and twenty-five plates, which he therefore artistically worked up into an "édition de luxe." With all due recognition of Schuler's warm interest in Dante and of the artistic exposition of the Comedy, as expressed in his preface, this choice can only be characterised as a regrettable mistake.

Immediately after the Edizione dell' Ancora there appeared another great series of illustrations of the classical school, which had originated a considerable time earlier.

Giovan Giacomo Machiavelli (died 1811) is the name of the somewhat unknown artist who in the years 1805-1807, in Rome, drew a hundred scenes from the Comedy and engraved them with his own hand. The prints, however, were not widely known till much later, when they were added as illustrations to an edition which appeared in 1819-21, at Bologna, from the press of Gamberini & Parmeggiani (reprint, 1826). There is one print to each canto; and in addition Dante's monument, by Pietro Lombardi, is given as the title vignette. In the Inferno and Purgatorio the scenery is in each case carefully executed in powerful strokes, while the bodies are drawn in the imitation classic manner in outline only, with but few—and those conventional—indications of the muscular frame. Thus arises a peculiar contrast between the dark background and the white figures which start out from it like plaster casts. In the Paradiso the scene is always laid amidst clouds, which are remarkably suggestive of the editions of the eighteenth century. The drapery is always carefully modelled on the antique patterns, and ancient garments and weapons are introduced everywhere, so that even mediæval heroes like Cacciaguida, Roland, and Charlemagne appear in the accoutrements of Romans, and Beatrice is arrayed in all the dignity of a Roman matron. The technical execution is very weak and not free from grossly incorrect

drawing, while a host of explanatory notes attached to names are not calculated to increase the artistic effect of the whole. Machiavelli, adapting the individual classical forms as these were current in his time, gives nothing more than an illustration, which is faithful to the letter of the poetry, but which in artistic charm, and especially in freshness of sentiment, is far inferior to the pictures of many an old book painter.

A third Italian series of copper-prints of this period, viz., the illustrations of Bartolomeo Pinelli of Trastevere (about 1790-1835), is much more interesting. Pinelli expresses among the Italian illustrators of Dante the same transition from Classicism to Romanticism which we have been able to see so clearly among the Germans. Known by the engraved scenes from the life of the Roman people which he grasped so well from its romantic and picturesque sides, he had yet grown up too much in the classic tradition to go over completely into the romantic camp. His one hundred and forty-four illustrations to Dante—sixty-five to the *Inferno*, forty-two to the *Purgatorio*, thirty-four to the *Paradiso*, and three title-pages—are an incoherent mixture of opposing elements; but he gives us, in a far higher degree than the artists of the *Ancora* edition, the impression of a strong artistic nature, which would have developed perhaps in more favourable circumstances into a ripeness of another kind. “Al merito eccelso di Alessio Francesco Artaud . . . Bartolomeo Pinelli Romano le sue invenzioni sul poema di Dante Alighieri di propria mano incise, e compite in questo primo di Marzo 1826 in segno di rispetto, stima e riconoscenza offre, dedica e consagra.” This dedication shows us that the well-known French investigator of Dante, Artaud, was his patron. Extraordinarily characteristic is the title-page to the *Inferno*. The artist himself is sitting, sunk in dreams, at his drawing-board, on which he has drawn Dante and Virgil, who appear on his right. At his feet sleep his two strong mastiffs. He is surrounded by a host of devils, which gaze at the drawing,



some in astonishment, some in mockery; while in the air blessed spirits hover. The picture looks like an expression of that wild, joyous conception of the life and strife of the artist which was then current in Rome; and the rest of the compositions possess an energetic, in fact often exaggeratedly powerful character—a “storm and stress” mood which suggests many of the brilliant passages in Schiller’s “Robbers.” In peculiar contrast to it are the Classicist reminiscences, which on the other hand are constantly coming into view. Many figures are modelled completely after the antique patterns, as for instance especially in the twenty-fourth canto of the *Inferno*, where a figure struggling with snakes has been the means of suggesting *Laocoon* to the artist; and in this case the heads are often exactly copied from antique gems. Flaxman too was not without influence on Pinelli, as the representation to *Purgatorio* 7 (lines 31 and following) above all shows. Here he represents death as a skeleton which stretches forth a bony hand towards innocent children to swallow them up. For all that, his *Hell* is a real place of terrors; and his *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* too, although they are inferior to the *Inferno*, contain quite a number of fine scenes, as for example the charming processions of angels. It is a phenomenon this, to which we cannot reasonably refuse our sympathy: an artist, at the turning-point of two periods, seeking, yea striving, but not yet strong enough, to burst the bonds of tradition and to go his own way.

The numerous illustrations of Domenico Fabris which appeared in the edition published by Fabris in Florence (1840-42) are the quintessence of these last-named cycles of pictures with additions. The three-volume edition is provided with five hundred vignettes cut in wood, which were throughout sketched by D. Fabris and engraved partly by the artist and partly by Balestrieri and Signora Elisa Mariani. In point of numbers this edition unquestionably contains the most extensive illustration of the poem known; its artistic

merit, however, is not so great, for as already hinted Fabris drew his material from many sources. The large majority of his scenes are simply copied from earlier illustrators—Flaxman, Pinelli, Ademollo, Nenci, L. Sabatelli, Bezzuoli, and G. B. Biscarra. Pictures from older masters too, as Giotto, Raphael, Leonardo, are scattered here and there in the work; but he was honest enough to add always the names of his prototypes, in spite of the fact that he often considerably altered the originals. It is instructive to see how he translated Flaxman's sketches, for instance, into a graphic wood-cut style in order to bring them into keeping with the whole; in fact, he often carries them out as carefully modelled reliefs, or fills in the surrounding space, which was only faintly indicated, with more powerful lines. For all that, these copies from other people's models interest us here only in so far as they show how deeply the influence of the Classicist masters, even after long years had elapsed, was still rampant. We must, however, subject to closer examination the original productions of Fabris.

The vast quantity of his pictures would alone suggest that he had made an exhaustive study of the poem, and that in his passion for illustration he emulated the most fertile miniaturists of past centuries. He too does not content himself with the mere reproduction of the events through which Dante passed, but like them he introduces the narrated historical events, the cities and districts mentioned, and the mass of metaphors and similes, without hesitation, in order to make the spectator familiar with the poet's entire world of thought. Unfortunately he too, like the old book painters, has the defect that his ability is far in the rear of his intention, and thus his effects are often enough odd, nay, absurd, in those passages where he departs from the domain of the traditional.

At the beginning of *Inferno* 23, for example, he draws a bird of prey flying off with a mouse in its talons, while to the mouse is attached a frog by a string (lines 4-6).

"The present fray had turn'd my thoughts to muse  
Upon old Æsop's fable, where he told  
What fate unto the mouse and frog befel."

At the beginning of the following canto he gives a winter landscape, because Dante happens to compare his horror with the dismay of a rustic who suddenly beholds his fields covered with snow. The thirtieth canto is then introduced by a representation of Athamas raging and of Ino, exactly as in the miniaturists of the Codices, Class IX., No. 276, of the Marciana at Venice (Bassermann, Plate 39), and 4776 of the Vatican (Bassermann, Plate 38); and at the close of *Purgatorio* 6 we see a sick man restlessly stretched on his couch (lines 150-53).

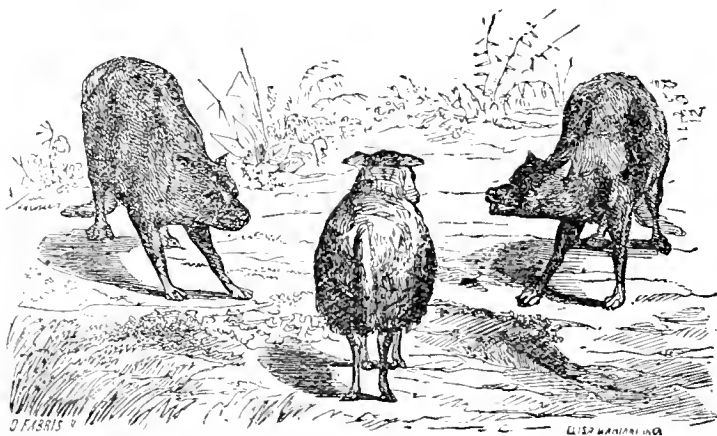
"If thou remember'st well, and can'st see clear,  
Thou wilt perceive thyself like a sick wretch  
Who finds no rest upon her down; but oft  
Shifting her side, short respite seeks from pain."

In *Purgatorio* 9 we see the soldiers of Cæsar pressing Metellus aside and violently bursting open the door of the temple,—the gate of Purgatory, opened by the angel to let the poets in, is said to creak as loud as this! Immediately thereafter follows a second simile: monks are singing to the organ tone, a symbolisation of the lines at the close.

"The strains came o'er mine ear, e'en as the sound  
Of choral voices, that in solemn chant  
With organ mingle, and now high and clear  
Come swelling, now float indistinct away."

The picture at Canto 17 of the *Purgatorio* is not without character: rocky mountain peaks project from cloudy vapours—a good interpretation of the simile with which this canto begins. The lank miser, on the contrary, in Canto 20, who is grovelling among his gold, appears a little weak, as does also the ship with its swelling sails in the twenty-fourth canto, which reminds us directly of several manuscripts (e.g., Altona). A flash of lightning, too, which in *Paradiso* 1

(lines 92-3) symbolises Dante's lightning-swift upward soar, is not a success; and in Canto 2 the optical experiment with the three mirrors is very clearly pictured, as in Codex 4776 of the Vaticana. Indeed, in certain parts it would almost seem as if Fabris had copied his pictures to the similes directly from the illustrated manuscripts. In Paradiso 4 he draws a "lamb between two wolves of hideous greed," a scene which the miniaturist of Codex Palch. I. 29 of the Magliabechiana at Florence had already introduced into an initial (Bassermann, Plate 34), and which, half-ornamentally treated, is there quite



Domenico Fabris.  
(*Vignette to Paradiso 4*)

in its right place, but here has more the effect of an explanatory wood-cut in a child's book of fables, as the above copy of it may serve to show. Quite original is the boy in Paradiso 14, who, sitting on the edge of a large bowl, stirs up concentric waves in it with a rod, as in lines 1-4:

"From centre to the circle, and so back  
From circle to the centre, water moves  
In the round chalice, even as the blow  
Impels it inwardly, or from without."

Here, as one may see, the road of the old miniaturists is trodden with complete consistency, a road which Bassermann

recommends in his concluding remarks as the only good one for the Dante illustrator of the future to follow; but this unsuccessful attempt by a man of mediocre talent is little adapted to make us enthusiastic for his principle. The same may be said of the historic scenes which Fabris has introduced here and there. Besides numerous and often very insipid "character heads" and half-length figures of the persons mentioned in the poem, he also depicts the incidents narrated from the upper world, from the shipwreck of Ulysses (*Inferno* 26, cf. Vatican 4776, Bassermann, Plate 37), as far as the murder of Buondelmonte in the sixteenth canto of the *Paradiso*; but these little sketches would to-day not do more than meet the demands of a book of history written in a popular style for older children. The views, sometimes very fair, of the towns and landscapes mentioned show, however, signs of the striving after historical explanation which first came to a successful issue in some of the most recent editions of Dante, of which we will speak later.

It was not long before Romanticism had conquered everywhere; hesitation and strife were ended, the battle decided; Christian mediævalism triumphed anew over classic paganism. The "*Divine Comedy*," however,—that great amalgam of antique and mediæval ideas,—offered a point of union, a neutral ground, as it were, to the hostile powers. The new art also, which now held sway in Europe, remained faithful to Dante.





### CHAPTER III.

#### THE GERMAN ROMANTICISTS.

AS modern German romantic art found a patron of kindred sentiment for its monumental works in the person of Ludwig I. of Bavaria, Dante illustration in particular obtained a princely promoter in the person of Prince, afterwards King, John of Saxony, who, under the pseudonym of "Philalethes," will remain as imperishably in our memory as the translator of the "Divine Comedy" as he will live on in that of his people as a ruler. We can nowhere, therefore, study Dante's influence on the German art of this period better than in Dresden, in the posthumous collection of the learned and art-loving prince, which now forms part of the royal "Secundogenitur Bibliothek." In an oration in memory of the king, printed in 1874 under the title "Zur Charakteristik König Johann's von Sachsen in seinem Verhältnis zu Wissenschaft und Kunst," Dr. Joh. Paul v. Falkenstein says: "It was quite natural that Dante's poetry should stimulate artists of the most varied tendencies to draw materials from it for sketches and pictures; and through the endeavour of distinguished artists to show their attention to the talented translator and commentator of Dante, and to express their thanks to him for opening up to them such a fund of grand poetic material, there arose very soon a most interesting collection of pictures and drawings. These accumulated and spread so much, year by year, through the kindly sympathy of the royal family, that a very valuable Dante album came into existence, which the king justly prized very highly, since there were in it drawings of the most distinguished artists,

who had contributed them as marks of their love to Dante and the king." Indeed, the two huge portfolios—the best drawings in which Baron Locella has published in his book, "*Dante in German Art*"—contain works by nearly all the important artists of that time; and as it would scarcely be possible to inspect and discuss all the innumerable Dante compositions of the romantic period, which lie here and there in German galleries and private collections, the Dresden collection must be continually returned to as the kernel and point of departure of this section. From the nature of their origin it is self-evident that there are many pieces of no great worth in the collection, since personal considerations and courtesies often intervened. But the best also are represented; and the mighty leader of the German-Roman brotherhood of artists, commonly called the Nazarenes, leads the way into the Dresden collection.

Peter Cornelius (1783–1867). Instead of the antique mythology it was now mediæval Christianity which hovered as the ideal before the artists' eyes; in fact, the pious "Friars of S. Isidor" found salvation directly in the amalgamation of art and religion, in an enthusiastic surrender to Christianity, and in the imitation of the early Italian masters, in whom they saw these ideals embodied in the most naïve and pure forms, while the but lately deified antique world was now proscribed as pagan and profane. Cornelius alone did not sacrifice his freedom of thought to this enthusiastic tendency, and on him, in addition to the Bible, Homer, Shakespeare, and Dante, too, exercised a substantial influence in the matter of his artistic evolution. He is the only one among his fellow artists to seize upon the "*Divine Comedy*" as a whole and to turn it to good artistic account; the others did indeed know and prize it, but they never felt themselves inspired by it to anything higher than individual scenes. In fact, even though we miss in him originality of form, Cornelius is the first for several centuries to transform the thought-world of the *Comedy* with free creative hand into a monumental work, as before

him Signorelli and Michael Angelo alone had done. By a reawakening of fresco painting Cornelius hoped to present Germany with a new art. There are two frescoes which his enthusiasm for Dante led him to execute—the roof of the Villa Massimo at Rome, and the paintings of the Ludwigskirche at Munich.

Even when at work in the Casa Bartholdy he began his plans for the Dante room of the Villa Massimo, which was originally to have been finished by himself. After his departure, Veit painted the roof, and Koch, as above mentioned, the walls. The four walls were to consist of ten chief pictures, “not counting the smaller paintings, bas-reliefs, embellishments, and architectural pieces”; the roof was destined for the Paradiso. On August 26th, 1817, Cornelius writes to Wenner: “The cartoon for the Paradiso is finished. I have sought to translate it into painting, and have striven to give everything metaphysical a shape, without abstracting anything from its symbolic meaning or at all weakening it. I place the spectator on a part of the heavenly scene from which he can see the whole, with the blessed ones, the saints and angels in the form of a rose. In the inmost highest heaven are Dante and S. Bernard, who obtain a sight of God through the mediation of the Virgin Mary. I show the three persons of the Godhead, not the three rings of Dante; this, as it were the centre and keystone of the whole, is enclosed by a circle of cherubs’ heads. From that as a centre spread only four great rays, which, however, are architecturally in keeping with the above-named circle, and likewise filled with angels representing the nine choirs who bear and move the heavens. The four spaces between will each be divided once more by a rich festoon of flowers, fruits, and birds, which likewise proceeds from the centre towards the four corners of the roof. In this fashion I have eight spaces left, which, following the division of Dante, I fill up with the saints and the saved in such a way that they describe a larger circle round the middle space, and thus form the rose. Round the



whole roof goes a large ring like a milky way of stars, and under each choir or division of the saints is seen the planet in which Dante places them. The eight spaces I have filled up as follows: Dante, by the side of Beatrice, soars up to the first circle of heaven, as in the moon. Here he finds the virgins and, especially, Piccarda and her companions. In the second space I take two planets, Mercury and Venus. Here we see Justinian, the Minnesänger Folko of Marseilles, and Cunizza. In the third space, as in the sun, are the doctors—*e.g.*, S. Bonaventura, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas. The fourth space depicts again two planets, Mars and Jupiter: here are the Christian heroes and princes, Charlemagne, Constantine, Godfrey of Boulogne, Joshua, and Judas Maccabeus. In the fifth, as in Saturn, are the men of contemplation, S. Benedict, S. Romuald, S. Francis, and S. Dominic. In the sixth are Dante and Beatrice in the sign of the twins, where the former is as it were examined by Peter, James, and John in his faith, his hope, and his charity. The last two point to the empyrean heaven. There is a band of saints from the old covenant and the new; this band begins with Adam and closes with John the Baptist." This design for the roof, which was partly executed in miniature fashion in water colours, and is now preserved in a frame under glass at the Secundogenitur Bibliothek in Dresden, was unfortunately never carried out by the master himself, as he had to leave the work when he accepted the invitation from King Ludwig to go to Munich in 1819. Only three large cartoons were finished, of which the one which contains the last two spaces is at present in the Museum at Leipzig; it was engraved by Schäfer, and has been copied by Dohme in his "*Art and Artists of the Nineteenth Century*" (Vol. I.), as well as in the "*Kunsthistorische Bilderbogen*" (No. 42,3). The separate scenes of the design were lithographed in outline by Adam Eberle, and published in 1830 with a text by Döllinger; while Locella on Plate 20, and Kraus in fig. 65, have reproduced the design entire.

Cornelius, as any one may see in the above description, had departed consciously from Dante in many cases, and had treated the subject from a free artistic point of view. For instance, he represented the Trinity as the centre of the whole, while the poet only gives us a presage of it in a simile; and he shows us with fine artistic feeling the saints seated, Dante and Beatrice alone standing, whereby the contrast between the restfulness of the blessed and those two who are travelling through the celestial spheres is beautifully and grandly expressed.

Philip Veit (1793-1877), who undertook the execution in fresco, was of opinion that he must attach himself more literally to Dante, and in the centre picture presented Dante and S. Bernard in adoration before the Madonna, above whose head the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove hovers in a halo. A water-colour sketch in accord with this is in the Städelsches Institut at Frankfurt, while an earlier sketch from Veit's hand, now in the possession of a private Frankfurt gentleman, approaches the conception of Cornelius, and presents Christ blessing along with the Madonna. The very fact too that Veit, closely following Dante, depicted all the saved as standing or hovering testifies to a very close acquaintance with the poem. But there is no doubt of the superiority of Cornelius, who transcended the bounds of mere illustration and thought to create a monumental whole, in which details should be subordinate to the total impression. Veit's frescoes have been engraved by Ruschweyh, and published in the "*Cotta'sches Kunstblatt*," 1825. A sepia drawing by Veit, in light tones, to *Paradiso* 24 is also in the collection of King John in Dresden. On the left kneels Dante; behind him, in a mandorla, is Beatrice, holding in her hands an open book, which contains the Pauline definition of faith. On the right is Peter; behind him two other saints. The picture is decidedly grand in composition, but the figures are weak.

Cornelius certainly quitted the work in the Villa Massimo with great reluctance, and he only did so at all because he had in view at Munich loftier tasks still. The world of Dante was

within him as much alive as ever, and he soon found in his new home the opportunity of occupying himself with it when he was entrusted with the painting of the Ludwigskirche. Let his own characteristic words, taken from a letter of January 20th, 1829, addressed to Fräulein Emily Linder, tell of his enthusiasm over this task: "For sixteen years I have carried about with me the idea of a Christian epic in painting, a powerful divina commedia; and there have been hours, indeed long periods, in which it seemed to me that I had been called to this task. And now my heavenly love is approaching me like a bride adorned in her jewels. What mortal shall I now envy? The universe is disclosing itself to my eyes. I see heaven, earth, and hell; I see past, present, and future. I stand on Sinai and view the New Jerusalem. I am intoxicated, yet in full possession of my senses." To him it was not accorded to carry through the grand work in its full extent: he had rather to adapt it to the means at his disposal, and to confine himself to the transept and choir; and we have unfortunately no idea of his original intent. His picture, *Christ in the Entrance to Hell*, in the Raszynski Gallery at Berlin—which dates from the same period—is the only one which moves entirely in this field of ideas, and it belongs in a certain sense to this subject. As Michael Angelo had done, he too depicted in the pictorial cycle of the Ludwigskirche the whole life of the race, from the Creation, through the Fall and Redemption, to the Last Judgment, and like him he laid the chief importance upon the representation of the Judgment, which, as a solemn warning to all believers, occupies the wall of the choir. In the Last Judgment, above all, he gave expression to his enthusiasm for Dante, and consequently we are chiefly concerned with that picture here. In 1835 the cartoon now in the National Gallery of Berlin was finished (the Städels Museum in Frankfurt possesses a first sketch of it), and it excited a wave of admiration. In 1836 he began the execution in fresco, and worked at it himself till 1840, when he brought it to a close. Christ as

Judge is enthroned on the clouds betwixt angels and saints; Mary and John kneel round Him, one on each side; while angels under him announce with trumpet tone the Judgment. Beneath, in the centre, stands the Archangel Michael with sword and shield, dividing the redeemed from the damned with inexorable calm. On the left is portrayed the resurrection of the blessed, among whom are Dante, Fra Angelico, and King Ludwig; on the right the judgment on the damned, and their vain, despairing longing for the regions of the elect. The prince of the nether world—a mixture of Minos and Satan, distinguished by his crown, his bat's wings, and his serpent tail—takes them into his custody. Under foot he treads the traitors Judas and Segestes—an ingenious and suggestive feature added by Cornelius independently of Dante. Before him stand the sinners of the seven deadly sins in expectation of the sentence: viz., the cowl-wearing hypocrites; the libertine, in the grasp of a merry demon; the fat glutton; the lank coveter, with distorted face; the miser, purse in hand, scourged by a devil; the sluggard, who lets himself be carried to the judgment seat; and the arrogant king, who is dragged down by two devils, and, in his fall even, still convulsively keeps hold of his crown. No one in front of this picture will be able to escape the impression of a powerful artistic spirit; and, just as with Signorelli and Michael Angelo, it is the mastery of the subject, and the comprehension of the poet's world of thought leading to independent creations, which elevate the work so high above others. On the other hand, however, the art of the Cinquecento, with which he is on a level as far as the thought is concerned, became fatal to Cornelius, in that he borrowed from the grand masters their treatment of form too. This work also bears within itself, in spite of its masterly genius, the incurable contrast between subject and treatment shown in all the works of Cornelius, which, internally inspired by the profoundest intellect, are externally nought but an imitation in the grandest style. To this must be added Cornelius' own defective and

too glaring colouring, which weakens the effect very considerably; and it has been said with much justice that the whole may be much better enjoyed in the cartoon or in the excellent print of Merz (reproduced in Dohme's "*Art and Artists in the Nineteenth Century*," Vol. II.) than in the original, as the art of Cornelius and his colleagues was, in general, one which showed to best advantage in cartoon, and neglected far too much the technical side of the painting. The historians of art have in this respect said their say concerning Cornelius, and have recognised his influence, with all due admiration for the man, as in the long run and at bottom a fatal one; but in our "*Iconografia Dantesca*" a prominent place is due to him, in any case, as one of the most profound artistic interpreters of the poet.

Alongside Cornelius, his colleagues and pupils fall very much into the background. Friedrich Overbeck (1789-1869) is related to him as Raphael is to Michael Angelo. Like Raphael, too, he only produced a portrait of Dante in a large painting in the Städel Institute at Frankfurt. This is in the well-known "*Triumph of Religion in the Arts*," which contains his whole conception of art, and shows at the same time, perhaps in the most striking manner, his lack of artistic independence.

With the "*Divine Comedy*" another artist, on the contrary, busied himself very profoundly: viz.,—

Johann Anton Ramboux (1790-1866), who, a pupil of the school of David, later attached himself in Rome entirely to the Nazarenes, and was known especially by his copies in water colours of old Italian pictures. Among his own pictures there is a "*Death of Ugolino and his Sons from Starvation*"; and the Städel Institute in Frankfurt possesses a whole series of illustrations to the *Comedy* by him. They are ten in number, large lightly coloured drawings (on an average about three feet broad and twenty-eight inches high), which bear the numbers 472-81 in the catalogue. The first picture is meant as a title-page, and shows the visionary Dante gazing at the sky; while the border below depicts Dante, Virgil, and the beasts; at the sides

the pangs of hell; and above, the bliss of the redeemed. Then the actual illustrations of the poem follow: No. 473 (*Inferno* 3): The boat of Charon and the spirits of those who have willed neither good nor evil. No. 474 (*Inferno* 4): The virtuous pagans and the unbaptised children. No. 475 (*Inferno* 5): Paul and Francesca hover up to Dante. They wear, in accordance with the Romantic conception, the rich clothing of their time, and are pierced together with the same sword. No. 476 (*Inferno* 8): The poets are ferried over by Phlegias. No. 477 (*Purgatorio* 2): The boat of souls guided by the angel. No. 478 (*Purgatorio* 3 and 4): Dante meets a band of souls chanting the *miserere*, and then Sordello. No. 480 (*Purgatorio* 7): The souls of princes in a meadow. No. 481 (*Purgatorio* 8): Angels with flaming swords on either side of a band of souls, among which is Malaspina. It is doubtful whether the artist originally intended to illustrate, bit by bit, all the chief scenes of the poem; in any case it is a particularly grand undertaking to give a cycle of lightly coloured drawings on so large a scale to Dante's poem. The execution belongs to the school of the Nazarenes, and is mostly suggestive of the earlier works of Veit.

Joseph von Führich (1800-76), of whom the Dresden Dante collection possesses two beautiful pencil drawings, chose for the subjects of his representation, in accordance with his general method, scenes which bear close relation to the Church. The first is taken from *Purgatorio* 8 (Locella, Plate 10), and represents souls singing praises, for whose protection two angels, girt with swords, hover down. On the left Dante and Virgil are approaching with Sordello, who is portrayed as a mediæval bard, with his lute strung round him. Führich grasps, as do few others, the mystically ecstatic tone of this scene, although it cannot be denied that his charming figures, with their open, pious eyes, are rather wanting in strength. The other picture is a scene from the tenth canto of the *Purgatorio*, and shows Dante and Virgil in contemplation of the marble reliefs which represent David before the

Ark of the Covenant, and the Annunciation; beside them moves the procession of the proud, who carry heavy blocks of stone. High grace of form, in combination with a general impression of melancholy, gives this drawing a charm quite its own (Locella, Plate 12).

Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1794–1872), lastly, is represented in Dresden—where all the following pictures too are to be found—by a sepia drawing to *Inferno* 9 (Locella, Plate 5), which originated in 1835. The angel opens to the poets the door of Hell, obstructed by devils—a scene which, by reason of the rather affected composition and striving after external beauty, is wanting in any expression of strength and energy.

Among the Munich artists more or less attached to the Nazarenes is, first,

Heinrich Hess (1798–1863), who in 1838 painted a picture in water colours to *Purgatorio* 1 (Locella, Plate 7). The poets kneel on the bank and gaze at the boat guided by the angel, who is bringing the souls to the Mount of Purification. The picture is very characteristic of Hess, and is executed in the method of the pre-Raphaelites in lively and bright colours, but without any picturesque effects in the modern sense. It was engraved in 1840 by Zumpe, and appeared in the edition of *Philalethes*.

Moritz von Schwind (1804–71), the delightful and unequalled master of German fairy-tale poetry, is in nature not akin to the Comedy; and his sepia drawing to the closing lines of the *Paradiso*, Canto 24, does not entrance us. Peter descends to Dante and embraces him; Beatrice stands beside them. It is a distinguished group, but one which, in comparison with Schwind's other works, has a very academic appearance (1849, Locella, Plate 19).

Wilhelm von Kaulbach (1805–74) chose a more powerful scene. His pencil drawing to *Inferno* 7 shows on the left Dante and Virgil standing on a rock on the bank of the Styx. They gaze at the naked sinners below wallowing in the

muddy pool; some of them are biting each other, while others, deep in the mud, scarcely recognisable in the filthy lake, are "gurgling in their throats." A very original feature is the way in which the vortices and bubbles which proceed from the mouths of the sinners under the surface are formed in the water (lines 117 and following). One cannot refuse to accord to the picture a certain infernal power, although in places it borders on caricature. Extremely characteristic of Kaulbach is the ironical inscription, "Drawn by W. Kaulbach, in this first glorious year of German unity. 1848."

I need only shortly mention a water-colour painting by Bernhard von Neher (1806-86). The poets regard the crowd of the voluptuous driven by the wind; among them Paul and Francesca, richly clothed in true Romantic style (*Inferno* 5, *Locella*, Plate 3).

Gustav Jäger (1808-71), the pupil of Schnorr and later in life Director of the Leipzig Academy, has drawn two scenes from the Comedy which are in accordance with his tender nature. The first, to *Paradiso* 9-11, is executed in pencil, and represents holy lights in the sphere of Venus. The other, a sepia drawing of 1847, shows the entrance to the sphere of Saturn as in *Paradiso* 21. On a huge stairway we see the blessed in monks' clothes, gazing upwards and singing praises, with halos of fire around their heads. In the foreground on the right hover Dante and Beatrice, towards whom Pater Damianus approaches from the left.

Quite in Raphael's style is the work of

Joh. Schraudolph (1808-79), whose pencil drawing, executed in 1856, closely follows in composition the fresco in S. Severo at Perugia. In the centre upon a throne sit God the Father and Christ; above them hovers the dove; right and left are Mary and John, as well as hosts of saints; farther off are Dante and S. Bernard kneeling (*Paradiso* 33).

The light sepia-toned pencil drawing to *Paradiso* 18, by Eduard Steinle (1810-86), which presents Dante and Beatrice in conversation with the chivalrous Cacciaguida, while



gorgeous heroic figures are enthroned in the background in eternal peace, denotes a transition to German mediæval history painting (1845, Locella, Plate 16).

The last to be mentioned in this connection is a less well-known artist, who was snatched away by death while still young in years, and who produced in three large cartoons to the "*Divine Comedy*" the chief work of his life:

Bonaventura Emler (1831-62). Each of the three domains of the poet is chosen as the subject of a comprehensive representation, in which the artist with fine feeling renounced a mere re-narration and arranged the material in a freer and more independent manner. In his means of expression, unfortunately, he does not transcend imitation of the most varied prototypes. In the picture to the *Inferno* there are all the chief scenes of Dante in capricious arrangement. A frieze, which tops the whole, presents the virtuous pagans and Dante with the beasts. In this frieze Raphael is the prototype; *Disputà* and *Parnassus*, and also the school of Athens, provide separate motives to the whole. In the chief picture, on the contrary, Signorelli and Michael Angelo serve as models, whose types are often borrowed in quite a striking way. In the *Purgatorio*, Emler comes near the sentimental Düsseldorf Romanticists. From the left a boat with richly clad souls draws near, among them all the darling figures of Romanticism—the king, the bishop, the youthful bard with laurel garland and lyre, the proud knight, the humble pilgrim, monk and nun, and languishing maidens. At an elegant Roman doorway the guarding angel is to be seen, before whom the two poets kneel. On the right are Dante and Beatrice with the four virtues, as well as Matilda plucking flowers. The other chief scenes of the *Purgatorio* are contained in a frieze at the foot and in two pilasters on the sides. Paradise, lastly—a semicircular composition—reminds us partly of the *Disputà*, partly of Dürer's picture of the "*Trinity worshipped by all the Saints.*" In the midst is the Madonna enthroned; above her are seen Christ blessing, and

the head of God the Father; round about are angels and saints. The different scenes of the *Paradiso* are introduced in an arched frieze which surrounds the whole. In the wedges Poetry and Theology are depicted, for which Raphael's roof paintings in the *Camera della Segnatura* were directly used as models. It is a lamentable sign of that remarkable period of art, which found its inspiration in the past, that a man of so great conceptions and such a grand talent for composition could give vent to his thoughts only in borrowed forms. The cartoons were photographically reproduced in 1862 at Vienna, and in 1866 at Munich (with text by Karl Witte).

Independently meanwhile of Rome and Munich, another branch of German art had sprung up and had vigorously developed; its rapid bloom is to be traced to Wilhelm Schadow, of Berlin. It is well known how a large body of young talented artists followed the influential teacher when he went from Berlin in 1826 to reside in Düsseldorf, in order to take over the direction of the Academy there. Soon was formed that well-defined and united school which, in its turn, was not without reaction on the place from which it originally proceeded. The few Berlin artists of this period with whom we shall have to deal are in very close relation to the Düsseldorf painters. This is shown in a most striking degree, at least for a time, in the case of

Carl Begas (1794-1854), who had the knack of adapting himself with wonderful ease to the predominant trend of public taste at any period. His toned pencil sketch to Dante (1834, Locella, Plate 6), at present in Dresden, belongs to the period when he was under the influence of the Düsseldorf painters. It shows Virgil, who is carrying Dante over the rocky precipice away from the pursuing devils down to the recess where the hypocrites are immured, as in *Inferno* 23, lines 34-66. The picture is throughout picturesquely conceived, and stands in strong contrast to the works of Cornelius and his followers by reason of the more realistic treatment of the figures, as well as of the environment.

Wilhelm Hensel (1794–1861), the Berlin court painter and professor, is represented in the Dresden collection by a drawing in sepia and blue to *Purgatorio* 30. This disagreeably mawkish and very theatrical production contains Dante on his knees, and in front of him Beatrice hovers among the clouds in a halo of angelic heads.

Hugo Freiherr von Blomberg (1820–71), who was educated first in Berlin under Wach and later in Paris under Cogniet, was nothing more than a clever amateur of pronounced romantic leanings. His twenty-seven coloured sketches to the *Comedy*, which are now in private possession in Berlin, and were published (1862–64) by Schauer, in Berlin, are nevertheless interesting in many ways. A title picture represents, in connection with *Purgatorio* 9, Dante borne upwards by the eagle. Then follow the actual representations from the poem: the wood; Charon—under unmistakable influence of the “*Dante’s Bark*” of Delacroix; the heathen poets, the pious heathen, Francesca da Rimini, the furies, the flaming graves, the centaurs, the wood of the suicides, Geryon, the seducers, the demons at the pitchy lake—with caricatured grinning faces of a very romantic kind; the hypocrites, the thieves, the makers of discord, the giants, Ugolino, the bark of souls (*Purgatorio* 1), the valley of expectation—with characteristic historic figures in costume; the entrance to purification, the proud ones and the angry, the last grade, Beatrice, the corruption of the Church, and the way into Paradise. Even if these pictures do at first suggest, in general, Anton Ramboux’s series of pictures, yet both artists are in technique and conception diametrically opposed. In the pictures of the one we have vigorous drawing and earnest thought; here we have a painter’s mood and romantic feeling. Blomberg learned from the French his purely picturesque comprehension of the scenes; light and shade, colour and movement entrance him, and he especially loves to paint naked bodies in glaring lights in contrast to the nocturnal blackness of the environment. His pictures are not a series of illustrations to which

the colour forms an unessential addition; they are thought out, each one for itself, as an independent painting, and are thus an element in the transition to the easel pictures from Dante, which will be discussed in another chapter.

The same may be said of the entire Düsseldorf school. If the cartoon was the ruling taste in Munich, the Düsseldorfers wanted to paint; if thoughtful Cornelius dreamed of a powerful bringing together in monumental cycles of the intellectual contents of the Comedy, this school of painters seized upon special scenes only of the poem in order to produce from them pictures complete in themselves. It is quite evident that the former conception of the poem is infinitely the deeper, and that in any case the Düsseldorfers were much less inwardly akin to the "Divine Comedy." In spite of this, the most important of them returned again and again to Dante, but they did not seek to fathom his depths; they did, however, seek him for picturesque motives, and it is very interesting to see how each of them chose only such scenes as fell in most with his own special nature and bent. This we see very characteristically in

Karl Friedrich Lessing (1808-80), who led the way for the real historical picture. His picture to Purgatorio 4, from 1852, now in Dresden (Locella, Plate 9), is indeed only executed in sepia, but it shows, nevertheless, by its broad touches, its careful gradation of tone in the colours, its vigorous modelling of the figures, an exceedingly picturesque treatment. As far as conception indeed is concerned, the scene where Dante talks with the souls of the sluggards, among whom Belacqua is characterised by the lute lying at his side, has become a pure historical picture, as Lessing understood it. The chief stress is laid on the realistic heads and on the historically faithful costumes; and Bassermann makes the pertinent remark that this group might have been listening as well and fittingly to a Hussite sermon as to the words of Dante.

From Heinrich Mücke (1806-91), who gave expression to his interest in the poet in an oil painting, "Dante reciting

the 'Divine Comedy,' the Dresden collection possesses a weak drawing to *Purgatorio* 29, lines 31 and following (produced in 1862, *Locella*, Plate 14), which depicts Dante's dream.

Julius Hübner (1806-82) sketched two scenes from the *Purgatorio*. The first, to Canto 1, shows on the left Dante kneeling in adoration, behind whom Virgil stands as a comely youth with a laurel chaplet on his head. Cato approaches from the right—a grand hoary figure with a finely modelled head, very suggestive of Dürer's *S. Paul*. In the background is the sea. The picture, drawn in 1839, is quite in accordance with the delicate and rather conventional art of Hübner. It was engraved by Weger, and appeared in the edition of *Philalethes*, 1865-66. The other drawing is from the year 1841, and, following *Purgatorio* 28, represents Virgil and Statius; before them Dante, who sees in astonishment Matilda plucking flowers on the other side of the brook. The illustration is a pen drawing, executed in sepia and a light blue tone, and likewise bears the delicate, undefined character of Hübner's art.

Ernst Deger (1809-85) gives only a very common representation to *Purgatorio* 12. It is a drawing in charcoal and white, dating from 1869, which represents Dante and Virgil on the left with folded hands, while from their right an angel appears. Above, among rocks, there are souls singing praises.

Like Deger,

Franz Ittenbach (1813-79) belongs to a special religious section of the Düsseldorf school. His drawing to the eleventh canto of the *Paradiso* (1863, *Locella*, Plate 15) is, like his well-known frescoes in the *Apollinariskirche* at Remagen, very sickly and meaningless. To produce such a stereotyped picture of the saints, representing, above, the half-length figure of Christ blessing, between angelic heads; beneath, upon the clouds and very symmetrically grouped, the Saints Francis, Bonaventura, Anthony of Padua, and Clara,—to produce such a picture the artist need not have referred to Dante at all.

Ittenbach's and Deger's comrade, too, in the work at the *Apollinariskirche*,

Karl Müller (1818-93), who made a drawing to *Paradiso* 24 in 1860, did not get beyond a delicate vagueness in form and expression. Peter hovers up to Dante and Beatrice, who are on their knees, and in the background a host of holy lights is seen.

Eduard Bendemann (1811-89), the type of the Düsseldorf, has taken many of his subjects from the *Comedy*. A pencil drawing, toned in sepia and blue, to *Purgatorio* 10-12 shows the souls of the proud, who, bent under loads of heavy stones, march slowly along; while on the left Dante, at the side of Virgil, stoops enquiringly to look one of them—the miniaturist Oderisi—in the face (1836, Locella, Plate 13). In the two upper corners of the picture medallions are introduced which represent the Annunciation and the Fall of Satan. The whole is of a delicate, tender beauty; and the representation of Virgil, especially, as a charming youth with a head of hair like a doll, is not calculated to inspire sympathy. Equally weak is the drawing to *Paradiso* 1, which was executed in pencil, touched up with gold, in 1843, when the artist had already removed to Dresden. Dante, holding the *Comedy* in his hand, stands with Beatrice in the clouds. This picture was engraved and appeared in the editions of *Philalethes* of 1839-49 and 1865-66. Lastly, a third composition of Bendemann may be mentioned here only by the way, since it has no real connection with the “*Divine Comedy*”: Dante and Petrarch with their loved ones, etched by H. Bürkner.

Theodor Mintrop (1814-70), in his pencil drawing to *Inferno* 18 (1861), has a much more powerful mode of expression. On the right are the two poets, on the left sinners scourged by devils. A decided realism in the well-drawn figures, and an energetic movement mark this drawing out from among many others. Quite a new and original idea, for instance, is that of a devil who with bestial delight deals out a kick at one of the damned. Mintrop shows a technical excellence, resting upon a more intimate observation of real life, which in general characterises the Düsseldorfers,

as compared with the art of Cornelius and his followers, which was out of touch with the world. The same technical excellence is recognisable also in a composition by

Albert Baur (born 1835) to *Inferno* 11 and 13. Dante and Virgil are standing, on the right hand, upon a rocky place; coming from the left, three centaurs burst in upon them. In the background is the sea of blood, in which the souls of tyrants are standing; centaurs shoot at them. On the right between the rocks the bull's head of the minotaur is still visible; and below are naked souls lashed by the rain.

One man must yet be named here by himself, a man who, outwardly starting from the same point as the Düsseldorfers, excelled them all by far in force and independence, the unfortunate

Alfred Rethel (1816-59), who has only quite recently been recognised and understood. There is no doubt that his wash drawing to the third canto of the *Purgatorio* (1850, Locella, Plate 8; and Bassermann, Plate 67) is the most artistically valuable picture in the collection of King John. It is, to be sure, not a Dante illustration, but a powerful historical picture inspired by Dante: the Burial of Manfred the Hohenstaufen. With two mortal wounds on his forehead and breast, the disrobed corpse of the hero lies in a grave prepared for him on the bank of the stream near the bridge of Benevento; beside him rests the shattered shield with its three salient lions. On the right the hostile troopers are pressing on to show their fallen foe his last honour and to cover him gently with heavy stones. On the left appears high on horseback the victor, Charles of Anjou, followed by the gravediggers and by two priests with extinguished tapers: the Church, implacable, had refused the excommunicated prince an honourable burial. The close of a violent drama appears before our eyes with awful impressiveness—a historical picture in the highest style and in the best sense of this so oft misused phrase; and Rethel's vigorous technique brings it directly before us with an impressiveness such as only a masterpiece can exert. Who in face of this picture would

gainsay the artist his right to borrow from the poet a free suggestion for the production of an independent work of art? And yet Rethel's picture cannot be counted among the actual illustrations of the Comedy; for he does not depict a scene from the poem, but something which is narrated there; and he has read not only Dante himself, but also the historical commentary to this passage. The grand composition is not a Dante picture, but it is a historical picture which, like other works by Rethel, might as well have been suggested by a historian; and much though we have to admire them, we cannot help thinking that the circumstance that Dante illustration has not generally followed the path pointed out here is quite explainable and justifiable.

The art of this period at Dresden is in many respects nothing but a branch of the Düsseldorf school. Hübner and Bendenmann indeed removed entirely thither, and many of the Dresden professors owed their education to the Düsseldorf Academy. That almost without exception the artists attempted at least once to represent scenes of the "Divine Comedy" ought not to fill us with wonder when we consider that the palace was that of Philalethes, the royal editor of Dante. In the king's collection there are pictures by all the most important Dresden artists of the time.

Pure landscape pictures to illustrate clearly passages of the poem are those of Carl F. von Rumohr (1785-1843), who painted a fine small view of Lake Garda in water colours to *Inferno* 20 (lines 61-78); of Traugott Faber (1788-1863), who gives, in connection with *Inferno* 31 (lines 40, *et seq.*), a sepia drawing of Monte Reggione Castle, near Siena; \* and of

\* Lines 35-40 (Cary's translation).

"As with encircling round  
Of turrets, Montereccion crowns his walls,  
E'en thus the shore, encompassing the abyss,  
Was turreted with giants, half their length  
Uprearing, horrible."

The view presented by the castle is indeed, even in its crumbling condition, very well adapted to make one better understand the simile of the poet.



Anton Arrigoni (1789-1851), who represents, likewise in sepia, the conjectural Tower of Starvation of Ugolino (*Inferno* 33) in Pisa.

Moritz Retzsch (1779-1857) clothed his respect for the king in the form of a clever play on lines 83 and 84 of the first canto of the *Inferno*. King John sits engaged on the translation of the "*Divine Comedy*," inspired by a genius; before him stands Dante's bust. The words which Dante says to Virgil,—

"May it avail me, that I long with zeal  
Have sought thy volume, and with love immense  
Have conn'd it o'er,"—

Retzsch makes the translator address to the poet. His three actual illustrations to the *Comedy* do not incite our enthusiasm. A scene to *Inferno* 17—the poets on Geryon's back—served as title vignette to Philalethes' editions of 1828, 1839-49, and 1849; the other two pictures are from *Inferno* 21 (the devil with the Elder of Lucca) and 27 (Guido da Montefeltro upon his deathbed, the devil and S. Francis). The very elegance of the technique of Retzsch, who only puts in his lines lightly with a fine-pointed pencil, is little akin to this subject, and his rather fulsome expression is directly repulsive, especially in the insipid child's head he gives to Virgil.

Carl Vogel von Vogelstein (1788-1868) was, of all the Dresden artists, the one who was most vigorously occupied with the "*Divine Comedy*." There is nothing by him at Dresden except a drawing in pencil and chalk to *Paradiso* 3, finished in 1858: on the left is Dante, deep in thought; on the right, Beatrice; between them, in the background, the moon as a large transparent ball, in the interior of which are to be seen blessed spirits. More important, as far as contents go, is a large painting which he executed in Rome in 1842, and which is now in the Academy at Florence. It was engraved by Rordorf and Gonzenbach, and printed in "*Die Hauptmomente von Goethe's Faust, Dante's Divina Com-*

media, und Virgil's Aeneis. Bildlich dargestellt und nach ihrem inneren Zusammenhange erläutert von C. Vogel von Vogelstein, München, 1861." Let us listen to the description which the painter himself gives in the text of this publication: "In the pictorial representation of this wonderful poem the artist first shows us, in the central picture, Dante at the grave of his love, Beatrice Portinari. Intensely desirous of being once more united to her, he gazes up in enthusiasm to the regions of Paradise, and resolves to make himself worthy of her company by leading a new, pious life. This resolve coincides in point of time with the creation of the plan of the 'Divine Comedy,' in which he poetically describes his religious and moral second birth, as a memorial to the dead loved one and as a lesson to contemporaries and posterity. The chief scenes of the poem are round about him in smaller pictures, the setting of which forms a church façade, like the thirteenth-century one, decorated with mosaics, in the dome at Orvieto. The façade is crowned with three pyramids. On the summits of the two lower pyramids are statues of the pope and the emperor, denoting the factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, who both have hold of the cross on the central pyramid. The landscape visible on the horizon represents Florence with its surroundings." Ten scenes from the poem surround Dante: below him, from the *Inferno*, the flight from the three beasts, the skiff of Phlegias, and Lucifer; in the right centre, the poets again greeting the daylight, and the angel at the gate of Purgatory; in the left centre, scenes to *Purgatorio* 4 and 27; above, Beatrice coming down from the chariot, Dante and S. Bernard worshipping the Madonna, and Dante along with Beatrice surrounded by S. Dominic, S. Francis, and other holy spirits.

There can be scarcely any doubt that this compilation of scenes from the Comedy, along with a portrait of Dante, was also inspired by the picture of Domenico di Michelino. The representation of the city of Florence, especially, in the background points with certainty to this fact. The architectural

arrangement and division of the whole is decidedly happy, and distinguishes this picture to its advantage from that of Michelino. In spite of that, the grouping of the scenes beside each other has even here a dry and rather didactic effect, especially since Vogel in the separate pictures has scarcely advanced beyond the conventional repetition of older prototypes. All the more is it to be regretted that a very suggestive—and assuredly very original—Dante illustration by him has disappeared at least for a time. He possessed a working copy of the “*Divine Comedy*” (the four-volume Roman edition in quarto of 1815–17), interleaved with paper for writing and drawing; and in this copy he not only entered notes and remarks of all kinds, but tried in a highly original fashion to illustrate the poem by making drawings here and there of the similes belonging to particular scenes. These compositions, amounting in all to ninety-six (sixty to the *Inferno*, twenty to the *Purgatorio*, and sixteen to the *Paradiso*), were executed partly with the pencil, partly with the pen, and partly in Indian ink or colours, and were criticised in the most contradictory manner by contemporaries of the painter. While Witte praises them for being especially ingenious interpretations of the poem, Riegel curtly writes: “The most peculiar things which in this connection have been given to the world are said to be the paintings of Carl Vogel (called von Vogelstein), representing the similes of Dante.” However, that may be, it is to be regretted that the heirs of the well-known Dutch Dante scholar, Dr. Hacke van Mijnden, were unable to find the valuable copy among his possessions. My correspondence on this question has remained without result, in spite of the many obliging answers I received; and a public enquiry too in several journals was likewise unsuccessful.

A very good idea of the difficulties to be met and coped with in the undertaking to illustrate Dante’s comparisons is given by a picture in the Dresden collection, painted by the king’s surgeon,

Dr. Carl Gustav Carus (1798-1869), a man not inconsiderably gifted as a landscape painter. It is a small oil sketch to *Inferno* 15 (lines 18 and 19),

". . . As at eventide  
One eyes another under a new moon."

Three men in old German costume are seen in front of a Gothic church passing each other suspiciously in the pale moonlight,—a harmless genre picture, which, however, considered as an illustration to Dante, is simply foolish. Two other pictures by Carus show a scene from nature in *Fiesole* to *Paradiso* 16 (lines 121-22), and the poets, who, having wandered through Hell, again greet the light of day. A drawing by Gustav Adolph Hennig (1835), representing Dante and Virgil in converse with the heroes Odysseus and Diomed, who are enveloped in flames (*Inferno* 26), can be only shortly mentioned, as also three sepia drawings by Karl Gottlieb Peschel (1798-1879), of which two recount, in the style of the sensational novel, the story of Ugolino, while the third represents the angel at the gate of Purgatory. A water-colour drawing by Johann Karl Bähr, painted in 1840, is also very weak. It represents the angels driving off the snakes, and Sordello (*Purgatorio* 5 and 8). An oil painting by the same artist represents Dante and Virgil before the city of Dis, the gate of which an angel is opening. Bähr also investigated Dante from the literary side, and wrote, among other things, "*Dante's Göttliche Komödie in ihrer Anwendung nach Raum und Zeit*, 1852"; and "*Vorträge über Dante's Göttliche Komödie*, 1853."

Adrian Ludwig Richter (1803-84), that charming man with the temperament of a German child, is likewise represented among the Dresden illustrators of Dante, though his nature was little in touch with this subject. In his autobiography, it is true, he calls the guide who took possession of him on his arrival in Florence his Virgil, and in spirit sees upon the door of the not very inviting inn the words:

“Lasciate ogni speranza o voi ch’ entrate”; but no one would conclude from these jokes that he was in close relationship intellectually with Dante’s work. A sepia drawing to *Inferno* 1, Dante and the Beasts, reminds one of Schnorr’s manner; the other picture represents Dante, S. Bernard, and two angels in adoration before the Madonna, and was lithographed as the cover design to the 1849 edition of *Philalethes*. One strange circumstance about the last picture is the subscript, “K. L. Richter, 1849,” which cannot be otherwise explained than by the assumption that it does not come from the artist’s own hand, but from that of somebody else, who made a mistake in the Christian name.

Two pictures by sculptors present naturally a predominance of the plastic element, and denote a certain return to Classicism: a drawing, finished in 1835, by Ernst Rietschel, to *Inferno* 15, which shows in a frieze arrangement Dante and Virgil in converse with Brunetto Latini, and in the background souls running about; and a beautiful picture, lightly tinted in water colour, by Ernst Hähnel (1844), to *Inferno* 24 and 25: the poets are standing upon a rocky weir, and look down in astonishment at the snake pool, in which Agnello Brunelleschi, Cacus, and manifold metamorphoses of men and snakes are represented. The much younger Theodore Grosse, too (1829–91), shows his early training as a sculptor in his endeavours to attain here also a classical beauty of form. Especially the sepia drawing to *Inferno* 2 (1867), the summons of Virgil from the circle of the virtuous pagans (*Locella*, Plate 2), is a very noble composition, but at the same time rather too evenly balanced, which, like all the works of its author, with all its external beauty, is wanting in deeper effects. The same is to be said of his sepia drawing to *Purgatorio* 27 (1870): the angel shows the poets the flames through which they have to go, and in which are to be seen souls hovering about, embracing and kissing one another. Those qualities which were bearable in these black-and-white drawings become perfectly unpalatable in a coloured composition, and for this

reason Grosse's oil painting in the Dresden Gallery, Dante and Virgil witnessing the landing of departed souls, is positively repulsive, with its large weak figures in meaningless colours, without any conception of the effect a painter should aim at. What the Frenchman Delacroix had conceived as early as 1822 with such penetration—viz., that a painting from Dante must represent a picturesque scene in a painter-like manner—was, even half a century later, not yet clear to Grosse. Thus deep was the influence in Germany of the art of Cornelius.

The rest of the pictures by Dresden artists scarcely merit mention; they represent that unmeaning academic tendency which has brought the artistic life of the Saxon capital unfortunately into entire disrepute for so long. A pencil drawing to Paradiso 20, by Robert Eduard Bary (1854), represents the baptism of Ripheus by Faith, Hope, and Charity. A picture by Adolph Ehrhardt (1851) to Purgatorio 27 shows Virgil and Statius; beside them Dante, who is lying on the ground wringing his hands before an angel; behind are flames of fire, through which Beatrice looks out. An oil painting by the same artist represents Dante, Virgil, and Statius resting on the steps, and the vision of Leah and Rachel. Friedrich Gonne, who previously had painted genre pictures such as "The Antiquary," "The Robber's Regret," "The Poetaster," "The Marriage of Convenience," and such like, made, in 1857, a drawing to the Comedy, Dante and Virgil again greeting the light (Inferno 34), which was of course very commonplace; and Carl Wilhelm Schurig drew the struggle between the angel and the devil for the soul of Buonconte, lying in his armour by the river side (Purgatorio 5), in 1853. Carl Andreae, educated in Düsseldorf under Schadow, painted two water-colour pictures to Paradiso 32 and 23. The former (1859) represents Dante and S. Bernard with the Madonna surrounded by saints and angels; the other (Locella, Plate 17) pictures the triumph of Christ, who, seated upon a throne, is carried through the air by angels, led on by genre-like,

censer-waving choristers. Lastly, we find two exceedingly poor pencil sketches by C. Schönherr, to Purgatorio 9 and 10—the angel shuts the door of the Mount of Purification behind the poets (1855); and to Inferno 4—Virgil points Dante to Homer, Ovid, Horace, and Lucan, who appear in a flood of light (1866).

In recent times the monumental painter of the Dresden school, Hermann Prell (born 1854, and therefore about a generation younger than the rest), has turned the “Divine Comedy” to artistic account in very different fashion. In 1893 and 1894 he executed, on the staircase of the Museum at Breslau, two large triple wall paintings, which symbolise the conditions of ancient and mediæval civilisation. He does not concern himself with details, but with fine suggestiveness displays Dante with his heavenly conductress, Beatrice, who typify for him the struggle of the Middle Ages after a knowledge of the divine.

In a similar manner a young Dresden sculptor, Hans Hartmann-Maclean, made a free use of the “Divine Comedy.” On a portal of the new Academy in Dresden, in the spandrels, on either side of a bust of Dante, cleverly introduced as the keystone, he has embodied the Heaven and Hell of the poet in relief (reproduced by Kraus in fig. 81 and in the “Kunst für Alle,” 1894). A female winged figure in a trailing garment, who hovers aloft through the clouds guided by two child angels, serves at the same time as an ingenious symbol for the air. A naked man in back view, with bat’s wings and tormented by snakes, which grow out of his legs, denotes the consuming hellish element of fire.





## CHAPTER IV.

### ROMANTICISM IN ITALY AND FRANCE.

IN this period also the art of the Romanic nations is essentially different from that of the Germans. The word Romanticism has a meaning for Italy and France quite different from its meaning when applied to Germany and to the Germans in Rome. "At the very time," says Muther, "when our young painters at Düsseldorf were painting with the milk of pious feeling their lachrymose, sensitive, utterly tame, and honest sentimental pictures—when the Nazarenes were holding their post-mortem on the livid corpse of old Italian art, and were trying to galvanise it, and with it the Christian piety of the Middle Ages, into new life—a young generation sprang up in France, which boiled over in the heats of enthusiasm, whose rallying cry was Nature and Truth, but at the same time and above all effect by contrast, pictorial antithesis, and a passion at once sublime and wild as an untamed tiger." It was Delacroix who, as I have already stated, made the decisive advance in this direction in Dante illustration, and when the art of the Romanic nations began to occupy itself with the "Divine Comedy" with this precedent, it may readily be understood that the easel picture was the principal medium employed. But even the ordinary series of illustrations could not avoid this influence; and thus the works to be discussed here, no matter whether they came from France or from Italy (which in many respects was profoundly influenced by France), have almost in every case a character in the highest degree picturesque, mobile, and passionate, which does not shrink



even from exaggeration and ugliness, if only it can combine picturesque effects with impressive representation of facts. Even in the case of the Trasteverine Pinelli we have already noticed in several positively brutal heads the revolt against the antique model, from which, however, he could not quite free himself.

Francesco Scaramuzza, the director of the Gallery at Parma, moves completely in the tracks of Romanticism, and his pen drawings to the "Divine Comedy" which are in the possession of the artist's family, and photographs of which were published in 1870-75 by Saccani, in Parma (one title and seventy-three pictures to the Inferno, one title and fifty-four pictures to the Purgatorio, one title and ninety-seven pictures to the Paradiso), are without question the most important contribution to Dante illustration which Italian art in the nineteenth century has to show. The technique itself shows, at the very first glance, quite a different character from the abstract outline sketches of the Classicist school: bodies and landscapes are modelled with vigorous touches, and receive an appearance of reality; realistic figure studies, with heads often quite modern, have taken the place of the idealistic forms drawn from the ancient statues—in fact, in many figures of the Inferno the artist does not shrink from the most common types of criminals if he can thereby heighten the awfulness of the total impression. However effective this may be outwardly, he lowers thereby Dante's Inferno to the level of a house of correction to some extent; and that inward pain which glows in the vitals of Dante's damned, and which Signorelli and Michael Angelo so awfully and sublimely expressed, is not to be looked for in this Hell. He allows himself a very peculiar deviation in Inferno 20, where in order to describe the doings of the seers there punished he represents a romantic witch-kitchen: realistic old hags in the garb of the Italian peasantry cower round a kettle, and all kinds of accessories—a slain child, human skulls, cats, owls, bats, and other beasts—complete

the uncanny scene. Ugolino too in the Tower of Starvation is represented as by all Romanticists with evident interest in the horrible; but Scaramuzza had already, at an earlier date, devoted an oil painting to this subject (*Esposizione Milanese*, 1838). In other places, again, and especially in the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, in his graciously smiling angelic children, he shows that he did not follow after Correggio, in Parma, in vain. *Purgatorio* 30 especially, Beatrice hovering in the midst of flower-strewing angels, and *Purgatorio* 33, the dance of the Virtues, would be inconceivable but for the prototype of his great countryman. His conception is peculiar in the *Paradiso*, where he almost always draws the figure of one saint only, enthroned on clouds and surrounded by angels. Scaramuzza's drawings were also often published in selections; thirty-six of them, for instance, were photographically reproduced in the *Spanish Italian Edition*, Madrid, 1868; and in 1880 Hoepli, at Milan, published "*Galleria Dantesca: 30 fotografie dei disegni a penna di F. Scaramuzza*," containing sixteen pictures to the *Inferno*, eight to the *Purgatorio*, and six to the *Paradiso*. Two years previously, at the same place, under the title, "*Dantino. Edizione microscopica della Divina Commedia con ritratto di Dante*. In 128°, illustrato con 30 fotografie di disegni dello Scaramuzza," there had appeared an example of that tasteless eccentricity which has now fortunately been cleared out of literature. Nevertheless, the pictures—five centimètres high and two and a half centimètres broad—were also published separately as the "*Galleria Dantesca microscopica*," with text by C. Fenini.

In a monumental painting, too, Scaramuzza vented his interest in Dante when, in 1842, he had to execute frescoes in the *Biblioteca Palatina* in Parma. He represented there the meeting of Dante and Virgil with the four antique poets, as in the fourth canto of the *Inferno*; further, Dante awakening under a tree in the forest; Dante flying from the three beasts to Virgil; Virgil and Dante before the gates of Hell,

and Charon; in addition to a frieze representing the cardinal virtues and the deadly sins; and on the coved ceiling, on four panels, the illustrations of *Inferno* 2 (lines 85 and 100), and *Paradiso* 10 (lines 70 and 145).

Of far less importance are the numerous steel-plates of an edition published in 1865-69 by Francesco Pagnoni, in Milan. It contains as frontispiece a portrait, with the subscript, "Dante Allighieri eseguito sopra Giotto, Nello Fiorentino e Pietro Lombardo dal distinto pittore Faruffini Federico"; the remaining plates are also partly the work of Faruffini, partly of Carlo Barbieri and Felice de Maurizio. Each division of the poem contains fifteen full-page illustrations; but besides these there are nine pictures, each containing four smaller plates, so that there are eighty-one pictures in all, which, however, often repeat the same scene. Technically they are very weak, and, in fact, the powers spent on this undertaking were not of a very high order. The scenery consists often of very meaningless landscapes, and the meeting of Ugolino and Roger is represented as taking place in a rocky valley instead of in the eternal ice. A rather insipid and diluted Romanticism goes through the whole, the figures lack expression, and it is easily seen that the artists were certainly more accustomed to produce the customary little genre pictures in which the frequently recurring type of the "beauteous Roman woman" was more in place than in an illustration to Dante. Perhaps the most prominent feature of this edition is that the similes are often illustrated—as, for example, *Inferno* 3 (lines 112-14), an autumn wood, and *Inferno* 1 (lines 22-4), a man fleeing from a boat to the shore. In the fifth canto of the *Paradiso* a special picture is devoted to Iphigenia sadly sitting by the sea shore, although her fate is mentioned only as an example. These illustrations, then, are rather to be called mechanical than artistic, as, indeed, all the Italian art of our century has only by a very slow process attained once more independent and individual importance.

Three pen sketches in chiaroscuro, by Vincenzo Gazzotto, of Padua, which were exhibited in the Esposizione Nazionale in Florence in 1861, I know only from the description of Andrea Cittadella Vigodarzere (in "Dante e Padova," 1865). The artist wished to present in three scenes the dominant mood of each poem, and chose from the *Inferno* the boat of Charon, from the *Purgatorio* the landing of the souls, from the *Paradiso* simply Dante and Beatrice. Two of these drawings were lithographed in 1858 by Pietro Sinigaglia.

In France the first who attempted a connected series of illustrations of the "Divine Comedy" was the painter and sculptor,

Antoine Étex (1808-88), who as early as 1835 had exhibited in the Louvre a relief, *Francesca da Rimini*. Later, he drew a series of twenty scenes from the poem, which were engraved on wood and printed in a French translation published in Paris in 1854 by Bry aîné. The pictures of Etex indicate a first step in the direction of Doré; he too wishes to work his way to picturesque romantic effects by means of the wood-cut, but he has neither the powerful fancy nor the technical excellence of his successor, and, besides, there were no satisfactory wood engravers at his disposal clever enough or practised enough to attain all the effects he strove after. Thus, then, his badly reproduced drawings are on the rather mediocre level of the contemporary Paris journals; they are, too, often weak and indeed mistaken in conception. In the *Inferno* he allows himself to be easily led astray into narrating ghost stories, and gives, instead of the sharply drawn figures of Dante, ghosts in long trailing clothes, with death's heads and other infernal apparitions. The other parts are no better illustrated. The *Paradiso* contains in all but a few pictures; among them, however, is the *ne plus ultra* of insipidity—viz., the representation to the tenth canto: a broad landscape, intersected by a river; in the background the sea; on an endless viaduct a railway train proceeds through

the land; on the left smokes a factory chimney; above on the right Dante, with two angels, hovers up to heaven in a—balloon! This must surely be a “modern” conception of Dante’s glorification of the powers of nature in the beginning of the canto, which appears very unsuitable, and testifies to a very meagre comprehension of the inner meaning of the poem.

Gustave Doré (1833–83), who had already taken material from the Comedy for two oil paintings, “Francesca da Rimini” and “Dante and Virgil among the Traitors,” produced the final realisation of a Dante illustration in the sense of French Romanticism. His one hundred and thirty-five illustrations to Dante (seventy-five to the Inferno, published in 1861; forty-two to the Purgatorio and eighteen to the Paradiso, published in 1868) are so well known and accessible to everybody that we may refrain from entering into a detailed description of them; they serve to illustrate the following editions:—

*L’Inferno di Dante Alighieri colle figure di G. Doré.* Parigi, Hachette & Cie., 1861. (Reprinted in 1862, and frequently since.)

*L’Inferno di Dante Alighieri, illustrato dal celebre designatore Gustavo Doré, riprodotto in fotografia.* Torino, Borri, 1865.

*The first canticle, Inferno, of the “Divine Comedy.”* Boston, De Vries, Ibarra & Co., 1867.

*Le Purgatoire et le Paradis de Dante Alighieri avec les dessins de Gustave Doré.* Traduction française de Pier Angelo Fiorentino, accompagnée du texte italien. Paris, Hachette & Cie., 1868. (New edition, 1872.)

*La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri illustrata da Gustavo Doré.* Milano, Sonzogno, 1868–69.

*De Komedie van Dante Alighieri.* Dutch translation by J. C. Hacke van Mijnden. Harlem, Kruseman, 1867–73.

- Dante, *The Vision of Hell*. Translated by H. F. Cary, and illustrated after the designs of Gustave Doré. London, Cassell, Petter & Galpin, 1865. (New Edition, 1866.)  
 Dante's *Vision of Purgatory and Paradise*. The same, 1868.  
 Dante Alighieri's *Göttliche Komödie*. Translated by Wilhelm Krigar, illustrated by Gustave Doré. Berlin, Moeser, 1870-71.  
 De Hel van Dante Alighieri. Dutch translation by Lodewijk ten Kate. Leyden, Sijthoff, 1877.  
 La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri illustrata da Gustavo Doré. Edizione economica. Milano, Sonzogno, 1880.

In Doré's compositions, which were faithfully reproduced by a number of wood engravers educated to the work by the artist, the picturesque principle is carried out to its last detail; indeed, the truth of the fact is occasionally sacrificed for effect. Sometimes he gives broad landscapes with quite small figures in order to make it appear that the space is completely immeasurable; sometimes, again, he only introduces large individual figures, such as Minos and pompous Nimrod blowing his horn, which then produce a still more gigantic effect; or he represents vast crowds of figures in a confused medley, which burst upon the eye as a shapeless mass. His endeavour is to attain a pronounced effect of colour in black and white, and he attains it in a wonderful manner through his technical mastery over his material. He is especially fond of glaring contrasts of light, the opposition of dazzling brightness and deep darkness, and he uses the landscape very skilfully to increase the tone of the scene—a trick which, before him, the older miniaturist of Codex Vat. Urb. 365 was the first to employ. A brilliant streak of light on a heavily clouded evening sky; a starry night; a flaming grave, as the sole source of light in a deep darkness, by which a dazzling light falls on the figures; a glittering ice atmosphere in a black night, etc.;—these are problems which delight him and which he has solved with ease and certainty. His chief interest was

naturally turned to the *Inferno*, to which his Dante illustrations first owed their success, and he is not on the same level of excellence in the other two parts. It is not easy to be quite just to Doré. If we are dazzled on the one hand by his brilliant ability and the clever manner in which he attains a desired effect, on the other hand we may dispute the justice of his artistic principles and the justifiableness of his aim, both in what appertains to form and to subject-matter. Pictorial effect by means of wood-cut, the appearance of colour in black and white, are what he desires to give, and in so doing he destroys the boundary marks of the two sharply marked domains of painting and drawing. He wishes to paint with the pencil, and the error in this case is just as great as that into which the Nazarenes fell when they only *drew* their pictures; he wishes to force his reluctant material to appear something other than what it really is. What was still worse, he did violence to his subject-matter whenever it seemed good to him. Gifted with an almost nervous, feverish fancy, he transformed what he had perhaps only hastily read into pictures which are indebted to him, not to Dante, for many a sensational feature; and he could not always resist the incentive to weave out of Dante's serious poetry a fantastic fairy tale, as in the thirteenth canto of the *Inferno*, where he represents the sinners transformed into trees as tree trunks with human faces and forms—a conception which is absolutely inconsistent with Dante's words. All this must be kept before our mind when we approach the work of the great French illustrator; then we shall attain the just point of view and grant him the admiration which he so richly deserves, without allowing ourselves to be deceived as to his weaknesses by his brilliant *esprit*.

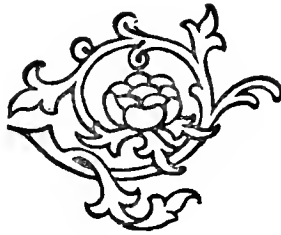
Yan d'Argent, whose compositions accompany the reprint of Artaud de Montor's French translation, edited by L. Moland (Paris, 1879), and some of them also the German translation of Aug. Kopisch (Berlin, Brachvogel und

Ranft, 1887), worked on Doré's lines, without, however, approaching him at all in energy and ability. His Charon, who drives the souls into his boat with the oar, his Farinata in the flaming grave, appear like weak reminiscences of Doré's figures. Like him, he seeks to attain refined light effects and strong contrasts, and he delights in landscape perspectives and in teeming crowds of the damned or of angels. What was permissible to Doré's master hand is here exaggerated and theatrical, and all the daring effects which we pardon in the former become, under the hand of the imitator, all the more unbearable the more they suggest their model.

In contrast to these works are the forty drawings of Adolph Stürler to the *Inferno*, which were reproduced photographically, with accompanying text, at Florence in 1859. Spürler illustrated later also the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, and the complete work, which consists of one hundred and twelve compositions in three folio volumes, was published in 1884 by Didot in Paris, with an introduction by Henry Delaborde; unfortunately I have only seen the portion relating to Hell. This little known artist—a Parisian by birth and a pupil of Ingres—lived chiefly in Florence, where the frescoes of the early Italian masters were his ideals. He possessed creative power only in a very small degree; and his Dante illustrations are not a congenial artistic embodiment, but an explanatory pictorial commentary for the sake of a better comprehension of the poem. The preface to the publication avows frankly its aim: “En faisant paraître de nouvelles compositions sur la Divine Comédie, notre intention a été surtout de donner une idée générale et rapide du poème de Dante et des principaux éléments dont il se compose.” The illustrations are quite in keeping with this intention; they tell their tale in a rather Philistine fashion and in somewhat stilted style, and, like the pictorial commentaries in the old manuscripts, they have numerous explanatory notes. The very fact, too, that the artist prefixes to his



work free imitations of Giotto's portrait in the Bargello and of Michelino's picture in the cathedral at Florence denotes the historical and didactic character of the work, which only belongs externally to this group, and really possesses very few points of resemblance with the true French Romanticism.





## CHAPTER V.

### THE ILLUSTRATED EDITIONS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

AS we have seen, two artists, absolutely opposite in genius, held almost undisputed possession of the illustrated editions of the "Divine Comedy" for generations—viz., Flaxman and Doré—whose compositions have over and over again accompanied editions and translations in all the civilised countries of Europe and also in America. Ademollo and Nenci, Machiavelli and Fabris, Scaramuzza and Étex, and Yan d'Argent, are of no importance in comparison with these two; and other great series of drawings, by artists such as Genelli, Koch, Pinelli, among others, were never published with the text of the poem at all. But although we have already discussed, in their relation to the history of art, the most artistically important illustrations of the nineteenth century, we have still to devote at least a few words to the motley crowd of editions of the "Divine Comedy" which are more or less illustrated, but which make no pretence to independent artistic importance.

As in the case of the manuscripts, the first to be mentioned are those which merely give a portrait of the poet, and of these there are many; in fact, so many that we must here entirely renounce the idea of treating them even superficially, all the more so since Theodore W. Koch, the American investigator of Dante, has prepared a list of all the portraits of Dante, with the editions in which each appears. (This list is to constitute an appendix to the Catalogue of the Dante Library of Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.) I may mention merely in passing that, while in the eighteenth

century the likeness by Bernardino India had held the upper hand, two other portraits before all others now maintain unconditioned sway: that engraved by Raphael Morghen, after the drawing of Stefano Tofanelli; and, since its rediscovery, Giotto's picture in the Bargello at Florence.

We next come to a whole group of editions, which do indeed possess a copper-plate to each of the three parts, but not of a strictly illustrative so much as of a diagrammatic and explanatory character. The picture to the *Inferno* represents the infernal regions in transverse section as an underground funnel. As in Botticelli's drawing, the chief scenes of the poem are shown on the different levels with quite small figures, in many cases explained by notes. In the same way the *Purgatorio* is reproduced diagrammatically as a mount with seven ledges, on which are seen the sinners who have repented of the various sins indicated by notes, while the earthly paradise crowns the summit. The *Paradiso*, lastly, shows usually the celestial spheres as concentric circles, with a feeble indication of the several planets as well as of the rose of heaven. The original of all these editions is that published in 1791, in Rome, by Antonio Fulgoni. The subjoined follow more or less exactly this copy: Milan, Tipografia dei Classici, 1804-1805; Leghorn, 1807; Rome, 1806, 1815, 1820, de Romanis; Venice, Vitarelli, 1811; Paris, Lefèvre, 1820; Padua, Tipografia della Minerva, 1822; Florence, 1826, 1830, 1837; London, 1826, 1842; Paris, Aimé André, 1829; Paris, Lefèvre & Baudry, 1836; Paris, Baudry, 1843. An edition published by Civelli in Verona (1864-68) also contains only tables and diagrams.

Other editions contain detached compositions to this or that canto of the poem: for instance, the Società letteraria, at Pisa, published in 1804-1809 a four-volume edition of the "*Divine Comedy*," containing, besides the portrait of Dante by Morghen, after Stefano Tofanelli, and the portrait of Cardinal Despuig, by Bettelini, three rather weak copper-plates. They illustrate *Inferno* 33, the scene of Ugolino,

drawn by Luigi Sabatelli, engraved by Bettelini; Purgatorio 6, Dante and Virgil meet Sordello, designed by Luigi Sabatelli, drawn by Pietro Ernini, engraved by Angelo Emilio Lapi; Paradiso 1, Beatrice exhorts Dante to look towards Heaven, drawn by Pietro Ernini, engraved by Pietro Bettelini.

"La Divina Commedia, Firenze, 1821, presso Leonardo Ciardetti," contains a portrait of Dante, engraved by Lasinio the younger, also Manetti's plan of the Inferno, which enjoyed the highest repute in the eighteenth century and in the beginning of the nineteenth, as well as two plates by Lasinio figlio, after Carlo Falcini; to Purgatorio 2, the skiff, soul-laden, and conducted by the angel, on the right Dante and Virgil; and to Paradiso 2, Beatrice, and Dante kneeling before Adam. Both prints are feeble and ill drawn; they are rather suggestive of Nenci's manner.

In an edition published at Udine, in 1823-28, by Fratelli Mattiuzzi, there is only one print which is not directly connected with the poem—Dante sitting in the grotto of Tolmino, with paper and writing materials before him—signed, "G. Derif dis., Miliara dir., Aliprandi inc." La Divina Commedia, Firenze, Passigli Borghi & Co., 1828 (reprint 1833), has a portrait of Dante, after L. Cateni, engraved by Lasinio the younger, and a second copper-plate, engraved by Marco Zignani, after F. Nenci's drawing, representing the episode of Paul and Francesca. Likewise engraved by Marco Zignani are two plates drawn by Francesco Pieraccini, to Inferno 5 and 14, which are to be found in an edition of the Comedy published in 1830 at Florence, "Tipografia all' insegna di Dante."

An edition of 1838 (Florence, David Passigli) has one title vignette and three plates. The first, engraved by Viviani, after Zandomenighi, represents in connection with Inferno 2, line 7 (Invocation of the Muses), Dante on a stool, with a pen in his hand; at his feet lies a demon, holding the Inferno; beside him Virgil, with the Purgatorio; on the left hovers Beatrice, with the Paradiso in her hand. The three small actual illustrations are quite unimportant: to Inferno 8,

the boat of Charon, engraved by Viviani after Zandomenighi; to Purgatorio 28, Dante, Virgil, and Statius on the bank of the stream, on the other side Matilda in rich apparel, drawn by Busato, engraved by Viviani; and to Paradiso 15, Dante, Beatrice, and Cacciaguida, drawn by Busato, engraved by Lauro.

Another edition, also published by David Passigli in Florence, 1840-41, has three plates to Inferno 5, Purgatorio, and Paradiso, all drawn by Marinovich and engraved by Viviani.

The German translation by Bernd v. Guseck, lastly, published in 1841, by Finck & Co., at Pforzheim, has a very peculiar steel-plate, after a drawing by P. C. Geissler, to Inferno 32, representing Ugolino and Roger. The maddest Romanticism, reminding us of the "Wolf's Glen" in "Freischütz," has full scope here: the rocks have fantastic faces of men and beasts; above stands Dante, conceived, just like Max in the opera, in doublet, with collar and knitted breeches, bearded, with no resemblance as a portrait. Virgil, who grasps Dante by the hand, is represented, on the contrary, as a Roman poet, whereby the peculiar impression produced by the picture is still more heightened.

More important and more characteristic than all these works is, however, another group of illustrated editions, which are peculiar to the nineteenth century, and were mentioned above in passing—the editions with historical explanatory illustrations, which, like the older series of pictures to Dante, owe their origin to the newly awakened historical interest of our time.

As early as 1827-29 an edition of the *Ottimo Commento* (Pisa, Niccolò Capurro) contains, besides the portrait plate by Morghen, a copy of Domenico di Michelino's picture in the cathedral at Florence and a view of the Tower of Starvation at Pisa. Domenico Fabris (Florence, 1840) then produced a large number of historical pictures, and especially of landscape representations for the better understanding of the poem, of which we have already spoken above. A "Divine Comedy," with the commentary of Ugo Foscolo, published 1842-43 in London, by Pietro Rolandi,

is likewise provided with steel-plates of a more didactic kind. Besides two likenesses of Dante and a portrait of Ugo Foscolo, there are two vignettes, the chapel containing the tomb of Dante, and the memorial of Ugo Foscolo at Chiswick, also plans of the three domains of the poet and a facsimile of the manuscript of Ugo Foscolo. In a higher degree still this striving after historical explanation asserts itself in the great edition of Lord Vernon (London, Boone, 1858-65). The third volume of this excellent edition contains one hundred and fourteen plates, among which only a few, engraved by Lasinio, after Seymour Kirkup's drawings, represent actual illustrations. These are the following pictures: Antinferno, Il Limbo, Avari e Prodighi, Lo Stige, Veduta del settimo cerchio, Gerione, and Lucifero; yet these large pictures, in which the figures are quite small, are inserted rather for the sake of explanation than for any artistic purpose. The great majority of the plates, however, are meant to promote historical comprehension of the poem, and consist of portraits, numerous landscapes, reproductions of Dante's house and tomb, representations of Virgil from old models, and, lastly, of a number of imitations of older works of art, such as the fresco of Giotto in Padua, the Ugolino relief in the Palazzo della Gherardesca, the fresco of Orcagna in S. Maria Novella, and others. Here for the first time the plan is consistently pursued which our predominately historical age, with its abundant technical aids, is about to bring shortly to perfection in two large editions de luxe—in the editions of Ricci and Berthier. "*La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri illustrata nei luoghi e nelle persone a cura di Corrado Ricci*" is being published in parts by Hoepli at Milan, and will contain four hundred illustrations, of which thirty are in collotype. The first part was issued in 1896. Everything is brought together with the greatest care and skill which appears fitted to transport us into Dante's world of thought: many landscapes, views of buildings which the poet mentions, contemporary likenesses of persons whom he commemorates, many old pictures and

statues, tombstones, armorial bearings, seals, and the like. The other edition is planned in a similar way: "La Divina Commedia di Dante, con Commentario secondo la Scolastica dal P. Gioachino Berthier" (Freiburg, Switzerland, Universitätsbuchhandlung), of which as yet the first volume, containing the *Inferno*, has been issued. In upwards of two thousand plates, this edition will give an "archaeological series of Dante illustrations," which are to present faithfully to the reader's eye all attainable portraits of the persons mentioned, the old plans of the cities named in the poem, and the landscapes which are described. "Cette illustration est la seule vraie," says the publisher enthusiastically in his prospectus. "Voir ce qu'a vu Dante, est le meilleur moyen de comprendre la partie imaginative du poème." This judgment we cannot subscribe to; for with all due recognition of the admirable diligence and loving care of the publishers, we cannot but observe that we do not find in these monumental editions pictures to the *poem*, but only illustrations to the *commentary*, which, like the commentary pictures in the old manuscripts, appeal to the head only, not to the heart. One can hardly say that this is tantamount to a complete understanding of Dante or to an exhaustive pictorial representation of his work; and such historical explanatory pictures would be more appreciated, it seems to me, in Ampère's "Voyage Dantesque," or in Bassermann's splendid work, "Dante's Spuren in Italien." The "sole true illustration" of the "Divine Comedy" can only be produced, in our opinion, when a genuine and clever artist feels himself so inspired by the personages of the poem and so struck by the artistic contents of the immortal work that he is forced, as it were, to give, by the power of his artistic personality, a perfect outward expression to the phenomena which have passed before his inner eye.





## CHAPTER VI.

### EASEL PICTURES AFTER DANTE.

THE easel picture, which in earlier times had been confined almost exclusively to religious subjects, and served worldly aims only in the portrait, had during the course of the seventeenth century stretched its domain beyond these limits into the genre picture and the landscape; and the further development of painting trended, in spite of many a reaction and many a by-path, finally more and more to the point of view that everything was worth painting if only an artistic problem attained expression in the picture. The art of the nineteenth century had again, as it were, to go through this entire development before the ultimate aim, the complete artistic unfolding of the real world, was attained. Beginning with antique ideals, it traversed in spirit the Middle Ages, before its eyes were opened to the wonders of its own time. If at first nothing was considered suitable but the classical world of gods and heroes, soon historical subjects and scenes from works of imagination were also drawn into the domain of representation, until art learnt to abstract from surrounding realities their most secret charms. The representations to the "Divine Comedy," among others, were profoundly influenced by this proceeding; for in the nineteenth century, for the first time, artists began to draw inspiration from the poetry of Dante for complete easel pictures, while previously book illustration and series of drawings on the one hand, and monumental works of fresco on the other, had been the two rival forms of expression. Only one man, as we saw above, had, so early as the fifteenth century, so much



as attempted anything of the kind—Domenico di Michelino, who, in his large picture in the cathedral at Florence, gave a likeness of Dante in the midst of scenes from his poetry. But this picture is really a portrait, as far as its chief scene is concerned; and the few pictures of the Last Judgment which present echoes of Dante's Hell are at bottom nothing but altar paintings of a thoroughly ecclesiastical kind; so that the easel pictures from Dante must be considered, in justice, as a new phenomenon, peculiar to our century.

If the illustrator had to direct his chief attention to fresh and lively delineation, if he had necessarily to try to follow the poet through all his meanderings, and to represent in a convincing manner even what was most strange and most wonderful, the task of the painter was a different one: he must seize upon some separate scene capable of artistic treatment in order to produce from it a painting carefully executed in form and colour. It is therefore natural that certain scenes of the poem very soon proved especially suitable and attractive for this purpose, and that, *vice versâ*, by far the most of the incidents were with justice left to the province of illustration. Before all others, two such favourite themes of the painter assert themselves: the episodes of Francesca da Rimini and of Count Ugolino, which gave occasion, especially in the period of Romanticism, to more or less successful pictures in endless variations. The stories of the unfortunate lovers and of the count languishing with his innocent children in the Tower of Hunger had become at that period so popular that many of these pictures can scarcely be reckoned as among the actual representations after Dante, for in the case of the vast majority of the artists it was not due to a comprehensive penetration of the "Divine Comedy" that they laid hold of these subjects, but was merely a result of the dominant sentimental and romantic mood; and so we need not suppose that they knew much more about the whole poem than these two episodes, so much in vogue at the time, in which it was chiefly the touching subject, not

the artistic treatment, which was to claim the interest of the spectator. Colomb de Batines had surely such pictures in his mind's eye when, in his list of more recent paintings from Dante, he penned the words: "Del resto la presente Serie è, quanto all' epoca moderna, più curiosa che utile, ed anzi queste sì tante e varie composizioni protrebbero in generale riporsi fra quelle che noi Francesi chiamiamo 'croûtes.'" Here too, consequently, a short enumeration of such pictures must suffice; it is only meant to give a general idea of the superficial popularity of these subjects, and makes no pretence to be complete or exhaustive.

Italian artists are naturally in the majority, and hardly an exhibition occurred which had not at least one such picture to show.

Giuseppe Bezzuoli (born 1784) exhibited at the Florence Exhibition of 1816 the "Love scene between Paul and Francesca," and painted later in life (about 1835) "Ugolino with his sons in prison"—a picture which passed into the possession of the American sculptor, Professor Horace Greenough. In 1825 a representation of Dante summoning Francesca da Rimini in the Inferno, by Gaetano Piattoli, was exhibited in Florence. The Esposizione Milanese (1826) produced a "Francesca" by Felice Cattaneo, the Florence Exhibition of 1828 two miniature pictures by Francesco Fournier, and the Exhibition in the Brera Gallery at Milan (1831) a picture by Cesare Dusi on the same subject; and in 1833 Carlo Ernesto Liverati (1805-44), who is otherwise particularly known as a genre painter, exhibited the loving pair surprised by Gianciotto; while Niccola Monti, of Pistoia, painted for a merchant at Leghorn the story of Francesca. This picture was engraved by Soldani after the drawing of Vincenzo Gozzini. Further pictures of the Francesca episode were painted by Angelo Corpiani, of Turin (Pubblica esposizione Torinese, 1838); by Cosimo Cosmi Condulmieri, of Reggio (1839), who also devoted a picture to Ugolino's story and intended to publish a series of drawings to the Comedy, of

which I have learned nothing further; also by Enrico Monti (Brera, Milan, 1842), by Romualdo Franchi (Esposizione Fiorentina, 1844), by Michelangelo Grigoletti, and by Achille Farina, of Faenza, who also exhibited, in 1845, a "Ugolino" in the Esposizione di Belle Arti della Società promotrice fiorentina. Of more recent date is a "Francesca" by Amos Cassioli (1832-91), which was reproduced in the "*Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*," New Series, VI., p. 239.

Several engravings of little importance may fittingly come in for mention here: "Francesca da Rimini," drawn by the Spaniard Francisco Vieira (died 1805), engraved by Bartolozzi; and two plates by Ercole Livizzani, treating of the episodes of Francesca and Ugolino.

Of the French painters who dealt with the story of Francesca da Rimini, the first to be named is Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), who, in an oil painting completed in 1819 and representing the surprise of the lovers, announced a turning away from his classical tendency in the direction of Romanticism. Three separate sketches to this picture, in the possession of Messrs. Gonse, Armand, and Lecomte, have been published by Charles Yriarte in his "*Françoise de Rimini dans la légende et dans l'histoire*," Paris, 1883. In one of his chief pictures also, the "Apotheosis of Homer" (1842), Ingres offered his homage to the poet of the Comedy by introducing him by Virgil's side in the ranks of the greatest poets and artists of all times. Perhaps the most excellent expression of the touching character and tender emotion of the scene, as conceived by that generation, is offered by the picture of Ary Scheffer (1795-1858), painted in 1834 (Donato Collection): this loving pair hanging on each other's necks in infinite resignation and speechless pain has even to-day a decided effect on the spectator; and the contrast shown by the painter between the two figures hovering obliquely through the picture, and the poets standing upright and at rest, is a very fine artistic stroke. The picture was engraved by Calamatta and reproduced by Kraus in fig. 68

The first sketch (in the possession of Madame Marjolin-Scheffer) is reproduced by Yriarte. Another of Scheffer's pictures from the first canto of the *Paradiso*, representing Dante and Beatrice (in the possession of Mr. Hemming), bears much more clearly traces of the almost morbidly emotional nature of the artist. The half-length figure of Dante stands rather lower down than Beatrice, who hovers in the clouds with a rather affected expression of rapture. A photograph of this, by Bingham, was published in 1858 by Goupil & Co., Paris; and in 1865 an engraving by Bernasconi appeared in an edition of the "*Vita Nuova*," published in Venice. Henri Decaisne (1799-1852), like Scheffer, a Netherlander by birth, who also owed his artistic education to the French, likewise painted a "*Francesca da Rimini*," which was exhibited for the first time in 1841 in the Louvre; and the fact that Gustave Doré also treated this favourite theme in 1861 in an oil painting has already been mentioned above.

Among English painters, Frederick Leighton painted a "*Paul and Francesca*" in 1860; and the chief of the pre-Raphaelite movement, Dante Gabriel Rossetti (to be mentioned later) painted a "*Francesca da Rimini*," which is now at Newcastle.

The episode of *Francesca* found less approbation in Germany. The picture by L. Hoffmann-Zeitz, at Munich, has become more widely known through Locella's publication (Plate 4), and in its mawkishly sentimental, but unquestionably painter-like conception, is rather suggestive of the French. Another picture too, of more recent date, by K. Kaiser, in Dresden, is a proof that traditional Romanticism is not yet entirely rooted out; and even such a modern painter in matters of feeling as Wilhelm Trübner (born 1851) could not quite free himself from tradition in his picture to the fifth canto of the *Inferno*. We must confess that he excels all his predecessors considerably in ability and especially in colour effects; he does not rest content with merely depicting the two lovers, Paul and Francesca, but he presents to our gaze the whole crowd of the libertines, among them Semiramis, Cleopatra, Dido, and

Helena, Paris, Achilles, and Tristram. But even this picture, which is reproduced in the "*Illustrierte Zeitung*," No. 2831, has still a trace of operative effects, the last roots of which lie in the Romantic period. Much simpler in sentiment and equally energetic in the treatment of forms and colours is one of the works of the chief of the new German fantastic art, Arnold Böcklin, which attained a wider popularity in the Munich Exhibition of 1897. The romantic side of the subject is no longer dominant here; this poet of colour was attracted merely by the suitability of the theme from the painter's point of view, and from it he formed a harmonious whole, with a charming scheme of colour. This picture, like the "*Francesca da Rimini*" of Anselm Feuerbach, belongs to a new period of art; both must therefore receive especial consideration below.

Count Ugolino was first made the subject of easel pictures by English artists; the first of them was by Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92) in a large painting, which was bought for £500 by the Duke of Dorset. A mezzotint of this picture by Dixon was published as early as 1774, and it was afterwards engraved by Raimbach. A small engraving after the same, by Brinza, is contained in "*Omnibus pittorico di Napoli*," II. 354. Also belonging to the eighteenth century is a picture by George Sidney, an article about which appeared in the "*Giornale delle Belle Arti*," 1788, No. 17. In Italy, Della Torre (died 1822) was one of the first to deal with this theme. Four aquatints by Gallo Gallina, "*da un pensiero di Pelagio Pelagi*," which appeared in 1823 at Milan, show very plainly the rather sensational romantic conception which the "*Tragedia del conte Ugolino*" underwent as time went on. The first scene represents Ugolino in the eternal ice lacerating his deadly foe with his teeth; then follow three stages of the death by hunger, quite characteristic of a certain tendency within the romantic school.

Almost every year new artists now produced pictures of the Ugolino episode:—

In 1828 Antonio Banfi, at the Milan Exhibition; in 1832

Giovanni Migliara, at Turin; and at Milan, Giuseppe Diotti, of Cremona, whose picture obtained great celebrity, and was acquired by Count Tosi. A whole pamphlet indeed concerning it was published in his native town, and it was frequently engraved—as, for instance, by Cesare Ferrari and by Bonnetta; it is also reproduced in the “*Cosmorama pittorico di Milano*,” Vol. I., 1835. In 1835 Giuseppe Bezzuoli (already mentioned above) followed, and in 1838 various other artists: Francesco Scaramuzza (who has also been mentioned previously), Antonio Gualdi and Claude Pinet, of Lyons, each exhibited a picture dealing with the story of Ugolino in the Milan Exhibition; and Baldassare Calamai sent to the *Esposizione Fiorentina* a picture which sought to outdo all the others in sensational effect—he represents the moment when Roger opens the Tower of Hunger and discovers the corpses of his victims. The same artist had painted, as early as 1835, a scene from *Inferno* 10, Dante and Virgil with *Farinata degli Uberti*, a picture which was also exhibited in Florence. The picture by Cosimo Cosmi Condulmieri (1839) has already been mentioned above. A more important name is that of Pietro Benvenuti (1769–1844), of Arezzo, the director of the Florentine Academy, by whom a “*Ugolino*” was there exhibited in 1843. This picture was acquired by Count della Gherardesca, and a lithographed version of the same appeared in Paris. Another picture on this subject is that by Constantino Sereno, exhibited in 1845 in Turin. I have not discovered anything further about the works of Scarabelli and Filippo Marsigli in Naples, which are cursorily mentioned by Batines. Better known, on the other hand, is the “*Ugolino*” of Edouard de Biefve, the father of the modern school of historical painting in Belgium.

The preceding by no means exhaustive enumeration proves satisfactorily how fond the painters of the romantic period were of dealing with the tragic fates of Francesca da Rimini and of Ugolino; even plastic art could not steer clear of these subjects. Thus we find marble groups of Francesca

and of Paolo by Gaetano Motelli (1805-58) in the Milan Exhibition of 1847, and by Felicita de Faveau (in the possession of Count Pourtalès in Paris), besides a relief of the Francesca episode by Antoine Étex (see above). Ugolino in the Tower of Hunger was represented in sculptures by Giuseppe Franchi, of Carrara, and by Salvatore Bongiovanni\* (Florence, 1837). Although it does not strictly belong here, the fact should not be forgotten that, in the domain of music also, these two episodes of the Comedy have most frequently inspired artists to creative attempts, and that the story of Francesca da Rimini has even been represented on the stage.

In the case of nearly every one of the pictures already named it was the interest of the subject which chiefly attracted artists to depict these scenes, and it is only very few of them which are able to afford us pure artistic enjoyment of long duration. The first to lay hold of a captivating scene from the "Divine Comedy" with daring hand and glowing feeling, and to embody it with the ability of a genius, as a gorgeous, passionate theme for a picture, complete in itself, was

Eugène Delacroix (1799-1863), whose grand painting, "Dante's Bark," we have already had occasion to mention several times as the real focus of all easel pictures after Dante. It was an artistic achievement when the young painter, twenty-three years old, exhibited his "Dante's Bark" in the Paris Salon of 1822; and the picture stirred up quite a tempest of opposite opinions. Like a revolutionary war-cry it worked in the camp of the severe Classicists; like a revelation it appeared to the younger men, who were affected by the breath of a new age. And this picture, "the first real picture in the painter's sense which the century had produced" (as Muther calls it), owed its origin to Dante's genius. Is not this a living witness that the immortal poetic genius was ordained to exercise a penetrating influence still on the pictorial art of centuries to come? The subject is taken from the eighth

\* A relief by the same artist, "Dante enlightened by Beatrice concerning his Doubts," was exhibited in 1830 in Florence.

canto of the *Inferno*: Phlegias ferries the two poets over the murky floods of Acheron, while the damned cling with the rage of despair to the boat; in the background looms up in lowering flames the infernal city, with its walls and parapets. The nocturnal darkness of the nether world lighted up by the glaring flames; the muddy stream, from which the blanched bodies of the wicked rise in passionate movement; the horror of the mortal man and the calm of his classic guide;—these are all contrasts of the most brilliant power and the purest pictorial effect. It is with full intention that the artist refrains from entering into particular details and avoids an illustrative treatment; in fact it is a difficult matter for us to decide which of the clinging figures is meant for Filippo Argenti, whom Dante specially mentions as among the band of sinners. The painter does not wish to narrate, but above all he wishes to—paint; and the care with which he set himself to the task, the conscientiousness with which he treats even the apparently unessential, are shown by the fine studies—about fifty in number—which he sketched as preliminary to the work; for he did not solve even the most trifling artistic problem without long and deep study. For instance, he did not quite know how to represent the water trickling off the bodies of the damned, and he studied this, consequently, in the three sirens in Rubens' "Landing of Maria de Medicis," one of which he indeed copied entire. This is a very characteristic proof of how the painter tries to interpret a clearly defined and detached scene of the poem with all its artistic charm, while the draughtsman, whose pencil tells a story swiftly and easily, takes pains to depict as vivaciously and exactly as possible a series of scenes either successive or else merging the one into the other. Long years after, when he was at the zenith of his fame, the master again turned to the "Divine Comedy" for the subject of a great picture. In the library of the Luxembourg Palace, in Paris, is a large cupola painting executed by him on canvas in 1847 and then fastened into its place, which represents



PLATE XVI.



Eugène Delacroix, Dante's Bark.



Dante and Virgil in the entrance to Hell among the ancient heroes, as in *Inferno* 4. Here too he is only concerned to make an effective picture: he sets the scene in a glorious landscape enlivened by nymphs and genii; while in the background souls in the happiness of Paradise quaff from pure fountains and pluck flowers. To this group of heroes and dames of antiquity, however, he added many whom Dante does not mention—as, for instance, the splendid figure of Aspasia, which gave him the opportunity to immortalize the most perfect feminine beauty, and is certainly the most celebrated figure of the whole work.

Delacroix had taken care not to lose himself in the mazes of narrative detail which the poem offers; but the other French painters who were interested in Dante went a step farther, and gave, as a rule, only pictures of a more general kind without any very close connection with distinct passages of the Comedy.

Hippolyte Flandrin (1809–1864), the pupil of Ingres, painted, in 1853, “Dante and Virgil in Hell,” now in the Museum at Lyons; this picture was engraved by Aug. Lehmann, and published in 1868 by Chatain, in Paris.

Henri Delaborde (born 1811), the well-known historian of art, exhibited in 1840 in the Louvre an “Appearance of Beatrice” in connection with *Purgatorio* 30 (published in the “Salon,” 1840); and

Auguste-Barthélemy Glaize (born 1812) produced in 1847 a picture of Dante writing his poem under the guidance of Beatrice and Virgil. Of an equally general character is a picture by

Jean-Léon Gérôme (born 1824), which bears the title, “Dante. Voilà celui qui va en enfer et qui en revient”; an engraving after this by Levasseur was published in Paris in 1870 by Goupil & Co.

The Belgian, Charles Wauters (born 1811), who is to be reckoned among the French so far as regards his artistic tendency, painted a picture, “Dante et Béatrix,” which was

engraved by A. Ledoux, and printed in Paris, 1876, by Chardon aîné; it was also reproduced photographically by Dusacq in 1877. Nicaise de Keyser (born 1813), lastly, painted the "Visit of Dante to Giotto."

Among Spanish artists, only Ag. Salinas-Ternel, who painted a picture of Dante and Matilda (Kraus, fig. 76), is worthy of mention.

In Italy easel pictures containing representations of definite scenes from Dante are naturally much more frequent; and the exhibitions had quite a number of such works, not one of which, however, earned a lasting name. Several of the better known among them may be mentioned here. Filippo Agricola painted, in 1820, Dante and Beatrice, from Purgatorio 30, a picture which was engraved, after the drawing of G. B. Borani, by Pietro Chigi, and included in the Roman edition of 1820-22. Giuseppe Mancinelli (1813-75), the worthy President of the Naples Academy, showed in 1833, at the Exhibition in the Museo Borbonico in that city, a "Dante with Virgil at the Gate of Hell," from Inferno 3. A picture by Antonio Morghen to the first canto of the Inferno, "Dante and the Three Beasts in the Wood," was exhibited in 1836 in Florence. The Esposizione Fiorentina contained further, in 1838, "Dante's Meeting with Manfred" (Purgatorio 3), by Giuseppe Meli; in 1839 a "Dante's Bark" (Inferno 8), by the Spaniard, D. Joaquin Espalter; in 1842, the "Spiriti magni" in the entrance to Hell (Inferno 4), by the Sicilian, Andrea degli Antonj, who also produced an *Atlante Dantesco*, which, though very famous in its time, is now unfortunately forgotten; and in 1843, "Dante and Matilda" (Purgatorio 31), by Niccola Fontani.

The Roman, Niccolò Consoni (1814-84), who was inspired by the German artists in Rome to imitate the early Italian masters, especially Raphael, painted in 1843, for Munich, a picture representing the meeting of Virgil and Dante with the ancient poets, Homer, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan (Inferno 4); it is somewhat strikingly suggestive of Raphael's Parnassus in

composition and in the treatment of form. An engraving by Clerici from this picture is contained in the *Gemme d'Arti Italiane*, Anno IV., 1848. Professor Tommaso Mainardi treated the same subject. Lorenzo Toncini exhibited in 1847, in the Brera Gallery at Milan, a *Piccarda Donati* (Paradiso 3). Roberto Bompiani, in the Sala del Popolo in Rome, likewise exhibited, in 1847, *Dante, Virgil, and Geryon*. Francesco Cogorno, in the *Esposizione della Società promotrice di Belle Arti*, in Genoa, 1852, showed a painting representing the meeting of Dante with Casella in the second canto of the *Purgatorio*, and Giovanni Boni painted, in 1853, a *Charon*. In 1861 Filippo Bigioli exhibited at Rome an interesting cycle, under the title, "*Galeria Dantesca*." It consisted of seven paintings on a large scale, executed for Romualdo Gentiluccio. The studies for these pictures, bound together in a volume, are at the present time being offered for sale by the bookseller Dotti, in Florence. Four of them (*Inferno* 5 and 6, and *Purgatorio* 1 and 28) have been reproduced by F. X. Kraus in his *Dante* (figs. 70-73).

Among the works of more recent Italian artists may be mentioned Francesco Valaperta's "*Manfred*" (1864); three pictures by Amos Cassioli, besides the "*Francesca da Rimini*" already mentioned—namely, the "*Messenger of Heaven*," after *Purgatorio* 2 (reproduced by Kraus, fig. 69, and "*Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst*," New Series, VI., p. 237), and "*Casella*," from the same canto, as well as a scene from *Purgatorio* 11; lastly, Tommaso Minardi's "*Dante and Virgil in the Wood*."

In Germany, as we saw, drawing was the dominant art among the Classicists and in the school of Cornelius, and therefore we have hardly any easel pictures to Dante by these artists.

Gottlieb Schick (1779-1812), the enthusiastic admirer of Carstens, painted "*Dante and Virgil on Geryon's Back*" (which passed later into the possession of his son, Julius Schick, in Stuttgart). Robert von Langer produced an oil

painting, "Dante conducted by Virgil" (see above); and there is at Munich, from the brush of Cornelius' pupil, Moralt, a "Landing on the Shore of Purgatory," painted in 1843. The Düsseldorf artists, and the school at Dresden related to them, produced, on the contrary, a series of pictures from the "Divine Comedy" which in part have been already mentioned in connection with their respective artists: for instance, "Dante reciting the Comedy," by Heinrich Mücke; the chief scenes of the Comedy, by Carl Vogel von Vogelstein; the "City of Dis," by Johann Carl Bähr; the "Landing of the Souls," by Theodor Grosse; and "Dante, Virgil, and Statius gazing at Leah and Rachel," by Adolf Ehrhardt. All these works, however, are far removed from what constitutes modern painting. The only one who worked up the material throughout in a painter-like fashion in a great cycle of pictures was Hugo von Blomberg, and he owed his conception solely to the French school in which he had graduated; and the fact that he painted a series of pictures to the poem justifies us in reckoning him still in a certain sense among the narrative illustrators.

A comprehensive backward glance at the whole of the easel pictures after Dante already mentioned leads to the result, at first rather bewildering, that Delacroix, in spite of the general recognition and admiration which his "Dante's Bark" won him, remained almost alone in the field, and that no one of his successors with similar aims conceived the "Divine Comedy" from a painter's point of view in his spirit. If, however, we follow the historic evolution of modern art, we have no cause to wonder at this fact. Painting had for long required literary and poetical stimulus; it had been serving to impart instruction and to aid narration, and the idea of a work of art being produced for its own sake had almost entirely vanished. Delacroix too, the champion of a new era in painting, nevertheless proceeded from a poetic work in the first instance, when he brought his artistic confession of faith before the eyes of an astonished world; and he too again returned to the poet who had so specially attracted all plastic

artists from his own time to this—namely, to Dante. Again Dante appears to us in the guise of a mediator between two periods of civilisation. He himself united in his work the ancient mythology and a Christian allegory, and it was reserved for the art of the Renaissance fully to comprehend this the most powerful poem of the Middle Ages, and worthily to interpret it. He was to a later generation a conductor from Classicism to Romanticism; and now, lastly, after a cold and colourless epoch, he has awakened by the glowing perspicacity of his language the first germs of our modern delight in light and colour, the sense of truth in art. Dante had made Delacroix to see; but he saw something different from what all his predecessors had seen—namely, a piece of startling reality; and he soon wrung from the poet the secret of turning his own time and surroundings into a true work of art. The “Massacre of Chios” followed the “Bark of Dante.” European art as a whole—sometimes more quickly, sometimes more slowly—took the same evolutionary path towards the unfolding of reality; and thus the contradiction is only an apparent one—that modern realism gradually lost all interest in Dante, although its first strong expression was a picture from the “Divine Comedy.”

For several decades art was occupied with a fierce struggle with nature, and we must here pass over all this invigorating movement which led to such brilliant triumphs: there was no foothold for Dante there. But as soon as painting, advancing by the aid of its newly acquired ability, soared aloft above the mere comprehension and penetration of nature to the free creations of roving fancy, the poet's shade again arose and anew drew the artists into his domain with his old charm. This process was first brought to a head in England, the land where the way had been cleared for modern naturalism, and which was now the birthplace of the new idealism. Refinement of disposition and feeling, which is characteristic of the end of our century, and which necessarily must find expression in art, first asserted itself, as a natural

reaction, in the very home of tireless machinery and seething city life. Art was to be a refuge from the dull routine of everyday existence, and there was a feverish desire in the air to seek that which had vanished from actual life—*naïveté* and sincerity, grace and purity. All that was looked for was found in sympathetic combination in the early Italian masters, who were, as one may say, newly discovered once more, and to whom an enthusiastic cult was devoted. In a very short time the pre-Raphaelites held sway over the whole artistic life of England.

We have already devoted attention to the strange artist who, himself educated in the Classicist school, denoted the first stage of this coming development. William Blake was the forerunner of the modern imaginative art of England, and many a link connects him directly with the real pioneer of the pre-Raphaelite movement,

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–82). With Blake, to whom he devoted a detailed biography, he had also in common an interest in Dante, which, however, in his case had a much more profound influence on his artistic activity. Rossetti was the son of the well-known Dante scholar, Gabriele Rossetti. From his youth he was quite familiar with the world of the poet, whose name was his by baptism, and he had so intimately imbibed in his father's house a love for early Italian literature that he himself published a number of works from the "Early Italian Poets" in an English translation, among others Dante's "Vita Nuova." His pictures too are often inspired by Dante. But it was not the dramatic power and forcible description of the Comedy which was calculated to attract him; and but a few of his works owe their origin to this source—viz., three small water colours from the story of Francesca da Rimini (in the possession of Mr. Leathart), and an oil painting of Pia Tolomei (after Purgatorio 5). All the more deeply and ardently did he plunge into the tender secrets of the "Vita Nuova," and passionately dwell upon the mystic love-relations of the youthful Dante with Beatrice,



the fine tone and spiritual feeling of which his sensitive artist's nature felt in its most secret emotions. His father had tried in an important work to prove the non-existence of a real Beatrice: for him, too, she was no earthly creature, but the heavenly love of the poet; not a woman of flesh and blood, but an ethereal, spiritual being, an embodied emotion. Hence the picture, "Dante on the Anniversary of Beatrice's Death," in which the poet sees his beloved, as, conducted by two men, she steps into his chamber, a supernatural apparition from another world. The picture, "Beata Beatrix," completed in 1866, now in the Tate Gallery in London, represents the death of Beatrice, who sits transfigured on the balcony of her father's palace and dreamingly melts into eternity, while a dove hovers down and places a rose in her lap. In the background stands Dante; before him flutters the genius of Love, bearing a flaming heart to heaven (reproduced by Kraus in fig. 79 and by Muther). "La Donna della Finestra" (1879) linked itself with the narrative in the "Vita Nuova," where Dante sinks to the ground in pain at the decease of his love, and is comforted by the pity of a lady glancing at him from a window. "Dante meets Beatrice on Earth and in Eden" moves in the same sphere of ideas; but the most perfect of these mood pictures from the poet's mystic life of love is the "Dante's Dream," in the Gallery at Liverpool. The artist, in his own words, leads us into "a chamber of dreams strewn with poppies, where Beatrice is seen lying on a couch, as if just fallen back in death. The winged figure of Love in red drapery (the pilgrim Love of the 'Vita Nuova,' wearing the scallop shell on his shoulder) leads by the hand Dante, who walks, conscious but absorbed, as in sleep; in his other hand Love carries his arrow pointed at the dreamer's heart, and with it a branch of apple blossom. As he reaches the bier, Love bends for a moment over Beatrice with the kiss her lover has never given her; while the two green-clad dream ladies hold the pall, full of May blossom, suspended for an instant before it covers her face for ever." Rossetti painted

the external appearance of Dante faithfully after the portrait by Giotto in the Bargello—indeed, he painted a picture entitled “Giotto painting Dante”; but Beatrice has the bewitching features of Elizabeth Siddal, who was Rossetti’s model for all his female figures. As Dante had devoted to Beatrice an artistic cult, he did so also to his early lost wife, whom he loved, it is true, with rather an earthly ardour.

George Frederick Watts seized again on the old romantic motive of “Francesca da Rimini.” Quite recently, on the other hand, Mrs. Phœbe Anna Traquair designed a whole series of twenty sketches in the pre-Raphaelite style, which were reproduced, with text, by John Sutherland Black, under the title, “Dante Illustrations and Notes, Edinburgh, Privately Printed. T. & A. Constable, 1890.” The volume was not offered for sale. The illustrations are not finished pictures, but roughly suggested situations, in which the influence of Botticelli is everywhere apparent. Notes, diagrammatic circles, and the like stamp them rather as explanatory sketches; and only in the frontispiece, with the “Appearance of Beatrice,” does the artist endeavour to give an artistically complete picture in the manner of Burne-Jones.

Sir Edward Burne-Jones also shows himself to be not wholly uninfluenced by Dante, though his pictures are only faint echoes and not illustrations of the poem. Among his paintings (of which reproductions were exhibited at the Dante Exhibition in University Hall, London, in 1893) we may mention “Beatrice,” a water colour of the year 1870, and the “Wheel of Fortune” oil painting, 1883. In 1873 Burne-Jones designed two stained-glass windows for S. Peter’s College, Cambridge, one of which is a representation from Dante.

In France too naturalism was followed by a sentimental school of painting. The dream world followed the world of sense, the mystically vague followed the tangibly real; in fact, it was just in French art that the most modern symbolism bore its most interesting, but also its most grotesque fruit. As an instance how this tendency too occupied itself in its

own way with Dante, a large painting by Henri Martin, "L'Inspiration," may serve; it was painted in 1895, and is in the Luxembourg in Paris. Dante stands in a wood in his red garment; in the air hovers Beatrice with two genii, one of whom holds a bunch of lilies, the other a lyre. The whole is indeed a real orgy of colour, but the effect very unintelligible and vague.

To the Germans Italy has always been the "promised land" of art; and as even an Albrecht Dürer did not return thence without having received fruitful inspiration, as he thought he must freeze after his return from that sunny land, so in later times an ardent longing for the south has remained with the very artists who would not agree that salvation was to be found in realism alone. A sunny, free-and-easy existence in light and warmth such as the northern nations know not, beautiful people in beautiful scenery,—these were the features which again attracted the German Neo-Idealists to Italy long after the Romano-German school of the Nazarenes had been superseded; and it was by these influences that Dante again won lasting sway over German art.

Anselm Feuerbach (1829–80) was the first who, on classic ground, was inspired, in the modern sense, to independent ideal creations in the grand style; and if there is in the majority of his works a feature of melancholy and resignation, this is but a stronger expression of his ardent longing for the dream of beauty which it was not granted him to reach. He did not become, like his predecessors in Rome, an imitator of and a purloiner from the old Italian masters, but he remained a German and a modern of the nineteenth century. The *maladie du siècle*—the "Weltschmerz"—was not unknown to him, and he went to pieces in the clash between his aspirations and his attainments. It was in such a mood that he approached Dante's work, and we seem to see into his inmost soul when we read his words written on January 15th, 1857: "I am plunged in Dante's 'Vita Nuova' in the evening hours. I see that the hearts of the thirteenth century beat as anxiously as

ours, that spiritual uncertainty and enthusiasm threatened to do away with the young poet, and that the man who could write the 'Divine Comedy' must have suffered much both in soul and body." Two pictures then hovered before his mind's eye: the "Second Meeting in the New Life" and "Francesca da Rimini." A short time afterwards he had already begun the first of his pictures from Dante: "Dante with Noble Dames in Ravenna" (reproduced by Kraus, fig. 78). He describes his conception as follows: "Dante wandering in the garden, speaking with noble, beautiful ladies; the youngest daughter, Beatrice, leaning on his shoulder. It will be like an Andante by Mozart. I stand full of forebodings at the turning point of my life. Will it be no dream that my time is coming now? The sketch originated some short time ago. When I had quite filled in the head of Dante, I saw women wandering in the garden. Through my soul in soft succession picture follows picture." The fate of the picture which the artist then began with such a feeling of success is like a symbol of his life. After unpleasant negotiations with the gentleman who had originally commissioned it, he took the picture back and offered it to the Gallery of Karlsruhe, which, however, roughly refused it. The Grand Duke at last bought it himself two years later, and it is now one of the noblest ornaments of the Collection which at first rejected it in so offensive a manner. How very high Feuerbach's interest in the personality and fate of the poet was we may see from a picture of the year 1858, representing "Dante's Death" (Collection of Herr Wesendonck in Berlin, sketch in the possession of Madame Rosalie Braun, Munich). Dante on his deathbed sees the form of the Madonna arrayed in the guise of Beatrice—a work of the deepest glow of colour, in which a study of the Venetian masters is evident. In 1864, lastly, was finished "Francesca da Rimini," which is now in the Schack Gallery at Munich, while two studies in oil of it exist, one in the Gallery at Mannheim and one in private possession at Vienna. The artist chose not the

PLATE XVII.



Otto Greiner.  
*Hercules in the Inferno, XVII*



moment of the surprise, nor the wind-driven souls of the lovers in Hell; \* he only wished to paint the two beautiful human beings, and he shows us Paolo listening to his beloved reading aloud. The scene is conceived without sentimental decoration, but with all the greater technical skill. It is a picture of a noble joy in an existence of beauty and love such as Feuerbach's own soul had dreamt of and longed for.

Arnold Böcklin (born 1827), the veteran master whose seventieth birthday we have lately celebrated, took for the subject of his already mentioned picture (1893) Paul and Francesca in Hell. The essential for him too is not the romantic subject-matter, but the pictorial effect, the charm of colour of the scene. The pierced bodies of the pair are glaringly prominent out of the deep blackness, and produce, along with the violet-coloured garment of Francesca, an exceedingly harmonious colour scheme (reproduced by Kraus, fig. 80). From Böcklin to

Otto Greiner (born 1869), Max Klinger's talented pupil, is a long step in time, but the eternally young master need not be ashamed to be grouped alongside one of the youngest. Like Klinger, Greiner too lives in the domain of fancy, and like him he proceeds withal from the most faithful study of nature, which has above all else procured him an absolutely astonishing knowledge of the human body. Dante's Hell therefore attracted him as soon as he was acquainted with it, and thus originated the pastel to the twenty-second canto of the *Inferno*, which was acquired in 1895 by the Städtische Museum of his native place, Leipzig. On the left stand Dante and Virgil, the former in a red, the latter in a white garment; before their eyes in mad chase the devils storm through the air, their naked bodies rising in amazing tangibility and masterly perspective from the dark background. In 1896 the artist finished in Rome the grand engraving from

\* Recently an early picture by Feuerbach, from the possession of Gurlitt's fine art repository in Berlin, was reproduced, representing Dante and Virgil with the hovering souls of the lovers (*Deutsche Kunst*, II., fasc. 19).

the same canto of the *Inferno*, which he has kindly permitted me to copy here. Unhappy Ciampolo, screaming copiously, in the clutches of a rout of devils, forms the centre of the picture; on the left the swine-headed devil Ciriatto is especially marked out; the right-hand side is taken up with the earnest figures of the two poets. The wild, fantastic nature of the hideous scene is depicted with striking power, and the naked bodies are treated withal with such care and masterly control over form, the drapery and accessories executed with such love, that in technique also this plate ought to be reckoned among the foremost productions of our time. To see Greiner's magnificent studies for his Dante picture—most of which are in the Dresden and Leipzig Museums—is to recognise clearly that German art did not in vain pass through decades of the most intimate observation of nature before it again dared take wing to higher spheres.



It is a work of the engraver's art which has been the last to occupy our attention, and perhaps this is not without its meaning. The easel picture after Dante, no matter how much it may offer of an interesting nature, can set forth but a very small portion of the artistic treasures in the poet's works, and it plays but a meagre *rôle* in proportion to the great influence which we have seen was exerted by the poet's mighty spirit for centuries upon pictorial art. For if we again try to take in at one glance the complete evolution of the pictorial representations to the "*Divine Comedy*," from the groping attempts of the professional illuminators to the masterpieces of the noblest artists of all times; from the Renaissance of individual artistic effort in the Middle Ages, through periods of brilliancy and decay, to those of new



creations; outside the narrow confines of the poet's native land into the wide civilised world;—if we do this we are always anew confronted by the fact that a complete penetration and artistic command of the mighty material offered by Dante are reserved for the domain of *drawing* in the widest sense of the word. We did indeed see gorgeous miniatures gracefully ornament the old manuscripts; we saw magnificent wall paintings of contemporary date reflect the spirit and the inner life of the poem; but all thoughts, events, narrations of the poet can only be sympathetically and tenderly treated by the draughtsman.

The era of painting too, which the nineteenth century called forth, has consequently, although often with sublime perfection, embodied only detached scenes from the poet, without penetrating his work as a whole. But Dante illustration in the real modern sense has not yet seen the light: be it hoped that the engraver's art, which has blossomed into a new life, will call it into being!





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# INTRODUCTION.

## *Dante's Personal Relation to Art and his Personality in Art.*

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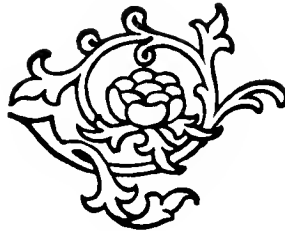
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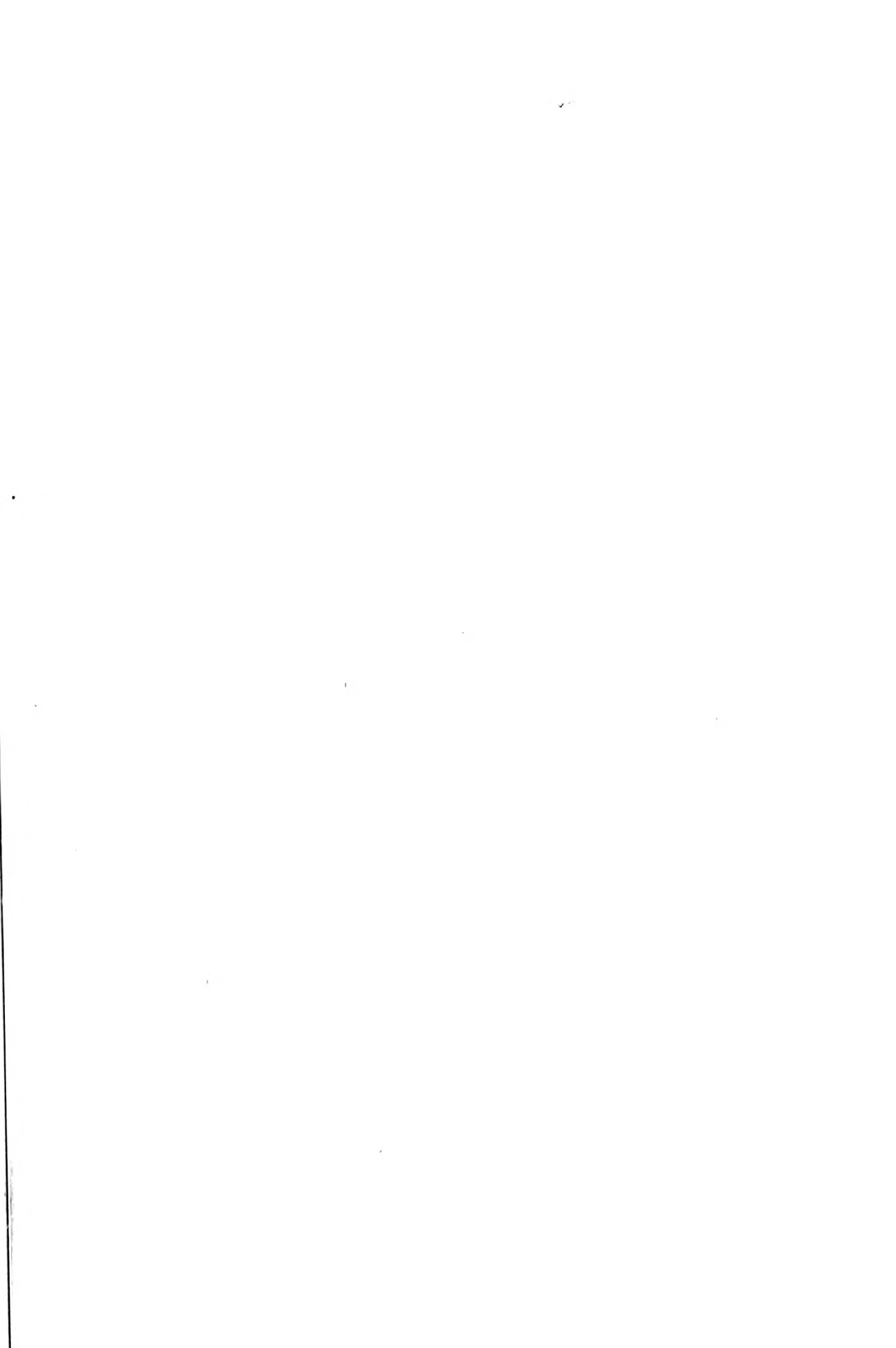
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